Art by
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Character Design by KEINOJOU MIZUTAMA and toi8

MAOYU
Archenemy and Hero
CHAPTER 1
BECOME MINE...
...HERO!
I REFUSE!

Archenemy and Hero **CHAPTER 1**

Become Mine, Hero!

MAOYU
Archenemy and Hero
"Become mine, Hero"
"I refuse!"
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MAOYU

VOLUME 1

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CHAPTER 1 Archenemy and Hero 001
Become Mine, Hero!

CHAPTER 2 Archenemy and Hero 047
Please Make Me Human

CHAPTER 3 Archenemy and Hero 089
Having Lots of Food Makes Me Very Happy

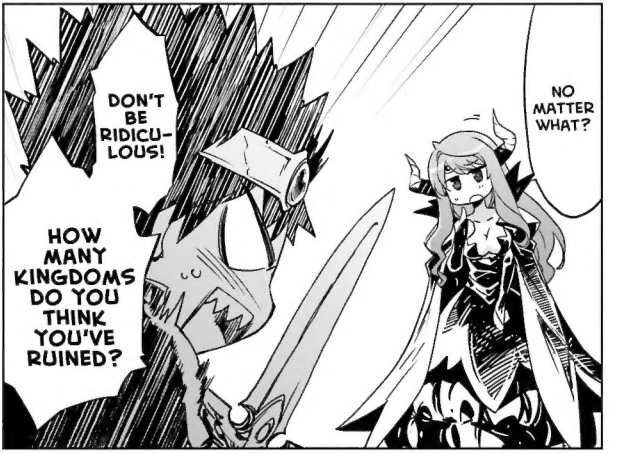
CHAPTER 4 Archenemy and Hero 131
Where Have You Been Wandering Around Until Now?

THE SPIRIT WORLD
THE DEMON QUEEN'S CASTLE

HERO

DEMON QUEEN

NO...


NO MATTER WHAT?
DON'T BE RIDICU-LOUS!
HOW MANY KINGDOMS DO YOU THINK YOU'VE RUINED?

IN THE NORTHERN FOREST KINGDOM, THE SKY TURNED BLACK, AND ITS PEOPLE SANK INTO POVERTY.
THEY RUINED THEMSELVES THROUGH THOUGHT-LESS DEFORESTA-TION, MAKING TOO MUCH COAL, AND POLLUTING THEIR LAND.
IN THE TIN KING-DOM, THE MONARCHY CRUMBLED WHEN THE MINISTER FELL UNDER THE INFLU-ENCE OF DEMONS.
THE GREEDY MINISTER TRIED AND FAILED TO SEIZE CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT AND CREATE A HAREM OF PRINCESSES.

IT'S A BAD HABIT OF HUMANITY TO BLAME DEMONS FOR EVERY-THING.
YOU'RE TRYING TO DECEIVE ME? UN-FORGIV-ABLE!
I'M NOT DE-CEIV-ING YOU.
WHAT ABOUT THE WAR WITH THE SOUTHERN KING-DOMS?
I SAW WITH MY OWN EYES HUNDREDS OF HUMANS CUT DOWN BY DEMONIC FORCES ON THE BATTLE-FIELD...
...BECAUSE YOU ATTACKED US, DEMON QUEEN.

BESIDES, CAN YOU CLAIM HUMANS HAVEN'T KILLED ANY DEMONS?
WHO ATTACKED WHO IS A MATTER OF OPINION.
WHO DECIDED DEMONS ARE EVIL AND HUMANS ARE GOOD?
IF KILLING YOUR ENEMIES IN A WAR IS EVIL, THEN THE HUMANS WHO KILLED DEMONS ARE EVIL AS WELL.
YOU'RE EVIL!
...

TAKE A LOOK AT THESE DOCUMENTS.
ぴら
FLIP
WHAT IS THIS?
IT'S PARCHMENT.
IT'S SO SMOOTH.
WHO CARES ABOUT THE PAPER?
WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS ITS CONTENTS.
EM-PLOY MENT
EXPLOSION OF DEMAND
TRENDS IN CON-SUMPTION
ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE
RUMBLE
ゴゴゴゴゴゴゴ
WHAT IS THIS?
THE RITUAL OF AN EVIL DEITY?
NO.
IT'S THE BENEFIT OF WAR ON HIGH CONSUMP-TION MARKETS FROM AN ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE.

BENEFIT? THERE IS NO SUCH THING IN WAR!
YOU DEMONS ATTACKED US IN ORDER TO DESTROY THE HUMAN WORLD!
ARE YOU TRYING TO DECEIVE ME, DEMON QUEEN?
ARE YOU TRYING TO PULL THE WOOL OVER MY EYES?
URGH...

IF YOU INSIST ON IT, HERO, I WILL FIGHT YOU.
DEPEND-ING ON HOW THINGS GO, I MAY ALLOW YOU TO DEFEAT ME.
SO LISTEN TO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY FOR HALF A DAY.
THIS IS...
...THE OPPOR-TUNITY OF AN ETERNITY.
VERY WELL. SPEAK.
HOW-EVER ...
...MAKE ONE SUSPICIOUS MOVE, AND I'LL CUT OFF YOUR HEAD.
I KNOW.
KHING

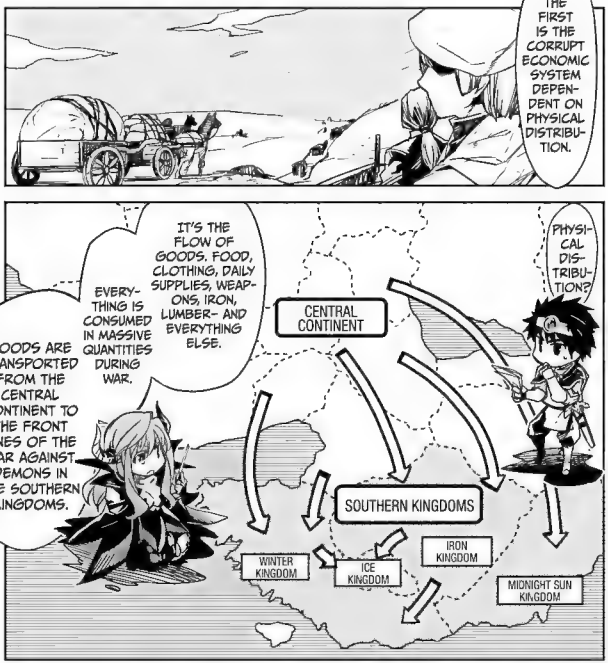
ぴら…
FLIP
ALLOW ME TO EXPLAIN.
TURN TO THE FIRST PAGE OF THE DOCUMENT IN YOUR HANDS.
IT'S A CHART.
AMOUNT OF CONSUMPTION
BUSINESS INDEX
POPULATION
SECOND HOLY KEY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
FIRST HOLY KEY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
GREAT FAMINE
IT'S CALLED A GRAPH.
THIS IS A VISUALIZATION OF THE CENTRAL CONTINENT'S CONSUMPTION LEVELS, MARKETS, AND POPULATION OVER THE LAST 50 YEARS.
AS YOU'VE NOTICED, SINCE WE BEGAN WARRING 15 YEARS AGO, THE CENTRAL CONTINENT'S MARKETS HAVE BEEN RISING.
ITS POPULATION IS BEGINNING TO RISE AS WELL.
SECOND HOLY KEY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
FIRST HOLY KEY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
....
YOU'RE LYING.

YOU CAN'T USE THAT KIND OF LOGIC!
PEOPLE MAY DIE DURING WARS, BUT THERE'S NO LOGICAL WAY THE POPULATION WOULD INCREASE!
GENERALLY, NO.
BUT THIS WORLD'S SITUATION BEFORE THE WAR WAS DIFFERENT.
FOR SEVERAL HUNDRED YEARS BEFORE THE WAR, MOST PEOPLE DIED FROM DISEASE OR STARVATION.
THESE TWO ARE INCREDIBLY FORMIDABLE ENEMIES, AND HUMANKIND WAS UNABLE TO OVERCOME THEM FOR OVER 500 YEARS.
INSTEAD OF THE POPULATION RISING, SOMETIMES PLAGUES WOULD RUN RAMPANT, KILLING ENTIRE KINGDOMS OF PEOPLE.

DISEASE AND STARVATION.
SINCE THE WAR BEGAN, THE NUMBER OF DEATHS DUE TO EITHER OF THESE HAS FALLEN TO 60 PERCENT.
WHY?
IS IT BY THE GRACE OF THE SPIRITS WHO HAVE SEEN THE TYRANNY OF DEMONS?
I HAVE LIVED A LONG TIME, BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN A SPIRIT.
THE REASON IS CLEAR.
THE LARGEST REASON IS THE FORMATION OF THE "CENTRAL CONTINENT CRISIS COUNCIL."
IN OTHER WORDS, THE KINGDOMS OF MEN FORMED AN ALLIANCE IN THEIR WAR AGAINST DEMONS.
BECAUSE OF THAT, KINGDOMS WITH PLENTIFUL FOOD WILL SEND PROVISIONS TO KINGDOMS THAT LACK. AND KINGDOMS WITH ADVANCED MEDICAL AND AGRICULTURAL TECHNIQUES ARE INSTRUCTING ALL THE OTHERS.
THOSE ARE THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF HUMANKIND!
A HUMAN WHO CAN'T EVEN ACCOMPLISH THAT WITHOUT WAGING WAR AGAINST DEMONS SHOULDN'T BE SAYING THAT.

DON'T BE SO FRUSTRATED.
DEMONS WERE IN A SIMILAR SITUATION.
...
THEY WERE TROUBLED TIMES.
DEMONS LIVE IN A CLAN SOCIETY.
POWERFUL CLAN LEADERS AND POWERFUL FAMILIES WITH LAND CONSTANTLY FOUGHT BLOODY BATTLES FOR SUPREMACY...
...UNTIL OUR WAR AGAINST THE HUMANS BEGAN.
BECAUSE OF THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES...
...WAR SAVED BOTH HUMANS AND DEMONS.

ULTIMATELY, THERE MAY HAVE BEEN SOME MEANING TO THIS WAR.
I'M RELIEVED TO HEAR YOU SAY THAT.
BUT THAT'S NOT A REASON TO KEEP FIGHTING.
IT'S NOT A REASON TO BEGIN FIGHTING EITHER.
I UNDERSTAND YOU DIDN'T DO THIS OUT OF SELF-INTEREST.
I'LL ACCOMPANY YOU, SO YOU SHOULD SURRENDER.
HMM...
I CAN'T DO THAT.
WHY NOT?
TWO REASONS.


THE FIRST IS THE CORRUPT ECONOMIC SYSTEM DEPENDENT ON PHYSICAL DISTRIBUTION.
PHYSICAL DISTRIBUTION?
IT'S THE FLOW OF GOODS. FOOD, CLOTHING, DAILY SUPPLIES, WEAPONS, IRON, LUMBER- AND EVERYTHING ELSE.
EVERYTHING IS CONSUMED IN MASSIVE QUANTITIES DURING WAR.
GOODS ARE TRANSPORTED FROM THE CENTRAL CONTINENT TO THE FRONT LINES OF THE WAR AGAINST DEMONS IN THE SOUTHERN KINGDOMS.
CENTRAL CONTINENT
SOUTHERN KINGDOMS
WINTER KINGDOM
ICE KINGDOM
IRON KINGDOM
MIDNIGHT SUN KINGDOM
DON'T TRY TO PET ME!
YOU NOTICED.
GOOD JOB.
HUH?
YOU NEED MONEY TO BUY THINGS, DON'T YOU?
?
HOW ARE THE SOUTHERN KINGDOMS PAYING FOR THAT?

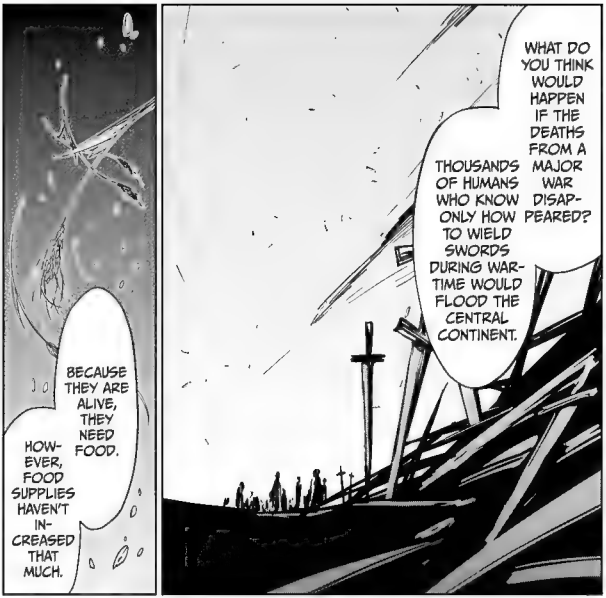
I SEE!
NOW I UNDERSTAND, DEMON QUEEN!
IT'S THE GENEROSITY TO HELP THIS OTHERS! IS THE KINDNESS OF HUMANS!
IT'S FINANCED BY THE WARTIME SUPPORT FUND CREATED BY THE CENTRAL CONTINENT CRISIS COUNCIL.
THE ENTIRE WORLD DONATES TO THE SOUTHERN KINGDOMS, WHICH ARE AT WAR.
THEY'RE GIVING THEM AN ALLOWANCE TO PURCHASE THEIR OWN STORE'S PRODUCTS.
CENTRAL CONTINENT
MONEY
SOUTHERN KINGDOMS
GOODS
THE CENTRAL CONTINENT IS SELLING THEIR PRODUCT FOR THAT MONEY.
GIVE MONEY TO OTHERS SO THEY CAN SPEND IT.
WHEN GOODS AND MONEY FREELY FLOW, YOU'RE CONSIDERED "AFFLUENT."
HOARDING YOUR WEALTH MAKES YOU "WEALTHY," BUT NOT "AFFLUENT."
WELL, IN OTHER WORDS...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
?
?
?

HUMAN SOCIETY DEPENDS ON THE SOUTHERN KINGDOMS FOR THEIR MASSIVE CONSUMPTION LEVELS AND DEFENSE LINE.
ONCE THE WAR ENDS AND THEIR MASSIVE CONSUMPTION OF GOODS ENDS, THE PRODUCERS OF THE CENTRAL CONTINENT WILL EXPERIENCE MAJOR DAMAGE.
THE EFFECTS OF THAT DAMAGE WILL RESULT IN TENS OF THOUSANDS OF DEATHS.

DOESN'T THAT SEEM STRANGE?
THE SOUTHERN KINGDOMS USE MONEY SENT TO THEM FROM THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE CENTRAL CONTINENT, RIGHT?
EVEN IF THE DISTRIBUTION OF GOODS HAS IMPROVED, THE MONEY EXCHANGED WAS ORIGINALLY THEIR OWN.

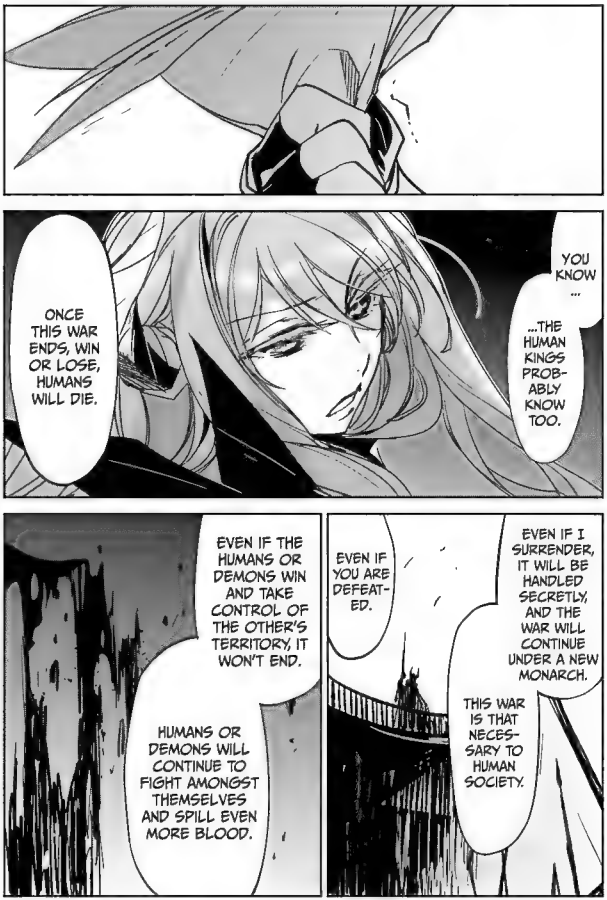
THE SOUTHERN KINGDOMS ARE EXPORTING "SECURITY" TO THE CENTRAL CONTINENT.
THE CENTRAL CONTINENT PAYS THEM TO SPILL THEIR OWN BLOOD IN WAR TO PROTECT THE HUMAN WORLD.
NOT ALL PARTS OF THE HUMAN WORLD ARE RAVAGED BY WAR, RIGHT?

THE OTHER REASON IS...
...RELATIVELY SIMPLE TO EXPLAIN.
THOUGH THE EXPLANATION IS SIMPLE, THE PROBLEM IS NOT.
HUMAN SOCIETY WAS UNITED BY ITS MAJOR WAR AGAINST DEMONS.
I EXPLAINED EARLIER HOW THIS IMPROVED DISTRIBUTION METHOD HELPED SPREAD MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY AND REDUCED DISEASE AND STARVATION.
HOWEVER, THIS WORLD'S FOOD PRODUCTION ITSELF HASN'T EXPERIENCED A MASSIVE INCREASE.
WHILE THEIR NUMBERS HAVE DECREASED, THERE ARE STILL THOSE WHO DIE FROM STARVATION.
YES.
I'VE SEEN STARVING CHILDREN COUNTLESS TIMES DURING MY JOURNEY.

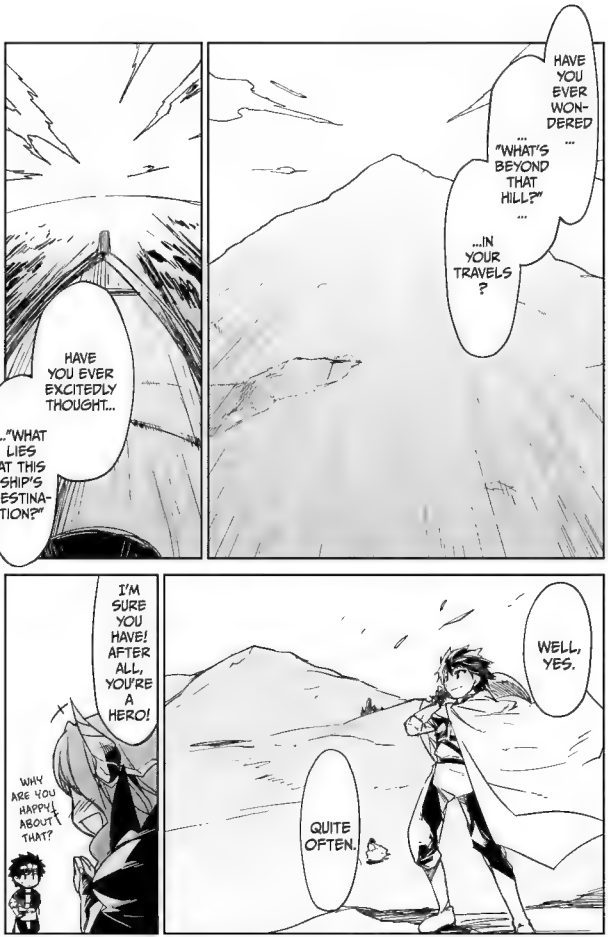

WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD HAPPEN IF THE DEATHS FROM A MAJOR WAR DISAPPEARED?
THOUSANDS OF HUMANS WHO KNOW ONLY HOW TO WIELD SWORDS DURING WARTIME WOULD FLOOD THE CENTRAL CONTINENT.
BECAUSE THEY ARE ALIVE, THEY NEED FOOD.
HOWEVER, FOOD SUPPLIES HAVEN'T INCREASED THAT MUCH.

BUT...
THAT'S REALITY.

WHY DID YOU COME HERE ALONE, ANYWAY?
WHAT?
....
TO DEFEAT THE DEMON QUEEN AND END THE WAR!
IT IS MY DUTY AS A HERO!
ENDING THE WAR IS THE ARMY'S RESPONSIBILITY.
KILLING YOUR ENEMY'S QUEEN BY YOURSELF...
...IS THE JOB OF AN ASSASSIN.


YOU KNOW ...
...THE HUMAN KINGS PROBABLY KNOW TOO.
ONCE THIS WAR ENDS, WIN OR LOSE, HUMANS WILL DIE.
EVEN IF I SURRENDER, IT WILL BE HANDLED SECRETLY, AND THE WAR WILL CONTINUE UNDER A NEW MONARCH.
EVEN IF YOU ARE DEFEATED.
THIS WAR IS THAT NECESSARY TO HUMAN SOCIETY.
EVEN IF THE HUMANS OR DEMONS WIN AND TAKE CONTROL OF THE OTHER'S TERRITORY, IT WON'T END.
HUMANS OR DEMONS WILL CONTINUE TO FIGHT AMONGST THEMSELVES AND SPILL EVEN MORE BLOOD.

ALL KINDS OF WORLDS HAVE FALLEN THAT WAY.
WORLDS?
YEAH.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
I...
I WANT TO SEE SOME-THING I HAVEN'T SEEN BEFORE.
?
HMM... IN OTHER WORDS ...


HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED ... ... "WHAT'S BEYOND THAT HILL?" ... ...IN YOUR TRAVELS ?
HAVE YOU EVER EXCITEDLY THOUGHT... ..."WHAT LIES AT THIS SHIP'S DESTINATION?"
WELL, YES.
QUITE OFTEN.
I'M SURE YOU HAVE! AFTER ALL, YOU'RE A HERO!
WHY ARE YOU HAPPY ABOUT THAT?

"BECOME MINE, HERO."
IN ORDER TO FIND THE UNKNOWN I DESIRE...
...I WANT YOU TO BECOME MY EYES, MY LIGHT, AND MY SWORD.
YOU WANT TO BECOME A HERO?
THAT'S ...
...WHAT I WANT TO SEE.
CLOSE, BUT NOT QUITE.
CURRENTLY, I AM THE DEMON QUEEN.
I CAN'T SAY IT MAKES ME HAPPY, BUT I FEEL RESPONSIBLE. I HAVE NO INTENTION OF FORCING THIS ROLE ON SOMEONE ELSE EITHER.
BUT...
...I WANT TO SEE SOMETHING I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE.
SO I'LL ASK YOU AGAIN.

NO.
YOU WON'T?
DEFINITELY.
ARE YOU SURE?
I REFUSE.
NO.
CAN'T WE NEGOTIATE?
WE CAN'T. I'M SERIOUS.
....

I BELIEVE WE CAN.
WHY WERE YOU LOOKING UP AT ME?
IS THAT SOMETHING A SCHOLAR SHOULD BE DOING?
I'M A SCHOLAR AND BUSINESSWOMAN.
A BUSINESSWOMAN NEVER GIVES UP.
I'LL MAKE ANY COMPROMISE NECESSARY AS I AIM FOR TOMORROW!
YOU SEEM MORE LIKE A HERO THAN I DO.
ACCORDING TO LEGEND, HALF THE WORLD CAN BE USED TO NEGOTIATE.
WHAT KIND OF HERO WOULD FALL FOR THAT?
IF SOMEONE DID FALL FOR THAT, HE WOULDN'T BE A HERO OR ANYTHING!
YES.
EVEN IN THE LEGEND I KNOW, THAT'S ULTIMATELY HOW IT ENDED.
I HAVE NO INTENTION OF USING TERRITORY TO NEGOTIATE.
HUMAN WORLD
SPIRIT WORLD
HERO'S TERRITORY
DEMON QUEEN'S TERRITORY
IT WOULD ONLY RESULT IN THE REFORMATION OF "MINE" AND "YOURS."
BECAUSE OF THAT, THOSE ARGUMENTS ARE OUT.

IN OTHER WORDS, MYSELF.
THIS I CAN GIVE YOU OF MY OWN VOLITION.
PLEASE BECOME MINE.

THEN NEGO-TIATIONS HAVE FAILED.
I DON'T FEEL LIKE FIGHTING ANYMORE, THOUGH.

NO.
I HAVE A SUG-GES-TION.

I WON'T BE STINGY AND OFFER YOU HALF.
HOWEVER, BECAUSE THE WORLD DOESN'T BELONG TO ME, I CAN'T OFFER IT TO YOU.
I WANT A HERO.
I WILL GIVE YOU EVERY-THING I HAVE.

YES. I'M PROPOSING A DEAL.
YOU…
YOU…
YOU
WHAT ARE…
DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?
THINK…
THINK…
THINK ABOUT IT!
YOU SHOULD THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK!
THERE'S NO NEED TO BE SO SURPRISED.
ONCE YOU REACH 15, ANYONE IN THE HUMAN WORLD CAN EXCHANGE SWEET WORDS AND SIGN CONTRACTS TO HAVE AFFAIRS WITH ANYONE THEY PLEASE.
I'VE ONLY READ ABOUT IT. THE ACTUAL ACT IS UNCLEAR TO ME, AND I'VE NEVER EXPERIENCED IT.
THIS WOULD BE ONE OF MY "UNKNOWNS."

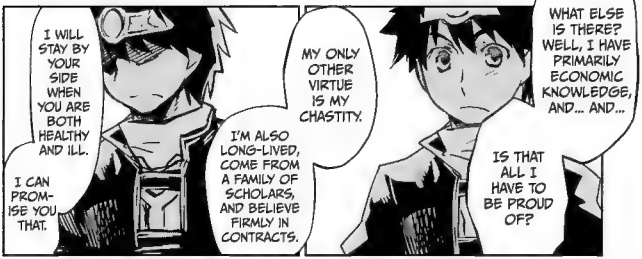
YOU LOOK PERFECTLY SERENE TO ME.
I NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD OFFER MY CHASTITY TO SOMEONE.
THE WAY I'M UNABLE TO REMAIN CALM IS INVALUABLE.
BA-DUMP
BA-DUMP
ARE YOU SURE?
DE-DE-DE...
NO?
N-NO WAY!
NEGOTIATIONS SEEM EVEN MORE POSSIBLE THAN BEFORE.
RCCH
STAY AWAY FROM ME!

LET ME PITCH YOU THE IDEA.
HAVING EXCLUSIVE ACCESS TO ME IS VERY CONVENIENT.
SHE'S PUSHING THROUGH.
LIKE HOW?
I'M EXCELLENT AT KEEPING DOMESTIC BUDGET BOOKS!
I PROMISE THEY WILL BE PERFECT!
BOOOM
DOMESTIC BUDGET BOOKS?
YES!
キリッ
SHINE
ALSO...

...I CAN TAKE YOU BEYOND THIS WAR.
IF WE CAN REACH A DIFFERENT CONCLU-SION...
...FOR NOT ONLY MYSELF...
...BUT FOR THREE THOUSAND WORLDS, IT WOULD BE SOMETHING THEY'VE NEVER SEEN.

THAT'S ...
...WHO YOU ARE?
YES.
THIS IS ME.
I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT THAT FOR A LONG TIME.
IF ARMIES END WARS...
...THEN KINGS ARE MEANT TO FIND THE CONCLU-SION.

ALSO...
...THERE'S SOMETHING I SHOULD TELL YOU SO THE CONTRACT ISN'T A FRAUD.
I'M TERRIBLE AT COOKING.
ALSO...
UMM...
I BELIEVE I LACK THE PHYSICAL BEAUTY DESIRED...
...BY THE TYPICAL HUMAN ADULT MALE.
REALLY?
TH-THAT CAN'T BE TRUE.
UM...
...ESPECIALLY YOUR CHEST.
NO, IT'S FINE! THERE'S NO NEED TO CONSOLE ME!
I APOLOGIZE FOR THESE THINGS!
MY CLAN HAS A TRADITION OF VALUING INNER BEAUTY OVER PHYSICAL APPEARANCES...
WHEN I WAS A CHILD... YES, IF I HAD PUT MORE CARE INTO MY APPEARANCE 150 YEARS AGO...
...I WOULDN'T BE EXPERIENCING THE FEAR OF A MANAGER FACING A RECALL DURING THE NEGOTIATION OF MY LIFE.
?


I WILL STAY BY YOUR SIDE WHEN YOU ARE BOTH HEALTHY AND ILL.
I CAN PROM-ISE YOU THAT.
I'M ALSO LONG-LIVED, COME FROM A FAMILY OF SCHOLARS, AND BELIEVE FIRMLY IN CONTRACTS.
MY ONLY OTHER VIRTUE IS MY CHASTITY.
IS THAT ALL I HAVE TO BE PROUD OF?
WHAT ELSE IS THERE? WELL, I HAVE PRIMARILY ECONOMIC KNOWLEDGE, AND... AND...

AS LONG AS YOU GO BEYOND THE HILL WITH ME, I WILL BE SATIS-FIED.
I'M NOT VERY SELFISH.
WELL? WILL YOU BECOME MINE?

IF I...
IF...
HERO?

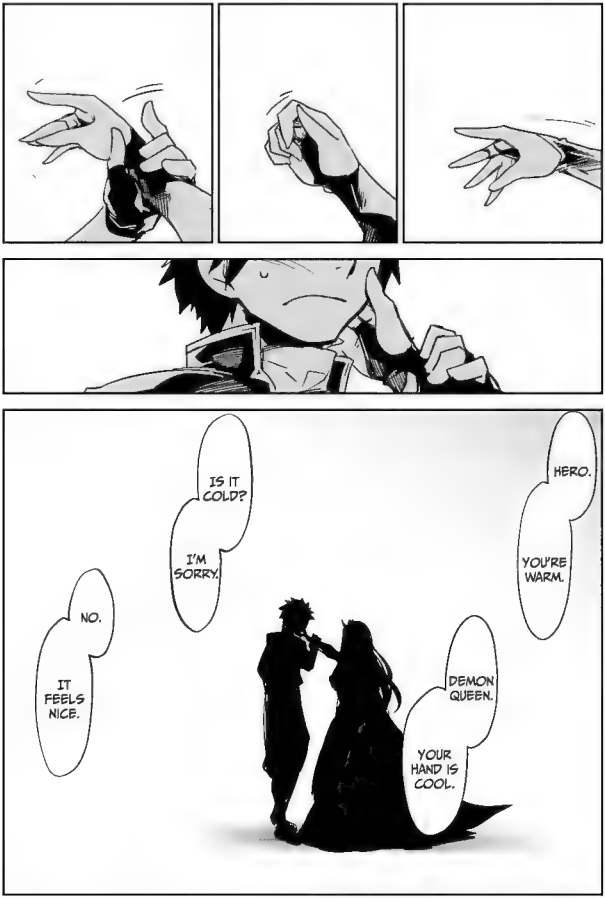
IF...
IF I BECOME YOURS...
...WILL GALLONS OF BLOOD FLOW?
WILL I HAVE TO KILL PEOPLE?
YES.
I WON'T DECEIVE YOU.
I CAN'T PROMISE YOU WON'T GET BLOOD ON YOUR HANDS.
BOTH YOU AND I WILL HAVE TO COMMIT NUMEROUS ATROCITIES.
WILL THEY...
...CALL ME A TRAITOR?
I CAN CONCEAL YOUR IDENTITY.
I SWEAR ON MY HONOR I WILL PRESERVE THE PURITY OF YOUR LEGEND.
HEROES ARE...
...THE HOPE OF HUMANKIND.

DO WE HAVE TO SEE THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HILL?
NO.
CONTINUING THE CYCLE OF WAR AND CONSUMPTION LIKE A WALTZ, AND ENJOYING PEACE BUILT ON MOUNTAINS OF BODIES AND RIVERS OF BLOOD...
...THESE ARE SOME OF THE OPTIONS THIS WORLD AFFORDS US.
THE WAR WILL CONTINUE, AND A GREAT MANY PEOPLE WILL DIE.
BUT...
...YOU WON'T HAVE TO DIRECTLY SULLY YOUR HANDS.
WHAT? YOU DON'T WANT TO FORM A CONTRACT?
I DON'T WANT TO FOOL YOU INTO AGREEING TO A CONTRACT.
NOTHING IN THE WORLD IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THIS.

THINGS YOU ACQUIRE WITH DECEPTION ARE LOST OVERNIGHT.
YOU'RE A WOMAN OF HONOR.
THIS ISN'T ABOUT GOOD OR EVIL.
IT'S A MATTER OF BUSINESS ETHICS PROVEN BY GAME THEORY.
IN ORDER TO OVERCOME THE PRISONER'S DILEMMA, YOU SHOULD DO WHAT BENEFITS BOTH PARTIES.
THAT IS THE FOUNDATION OF STABLE RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIPS.
....
ALL RIGHT.

I WILL BECOME YOURS.
ARE YOU SURE?
YES.
JUST SO YOU KNOW, IT'S NOT JUST FOR YOUR BOOBS.
?
YOU LIKE THESE?
SQUEEZE
DON'T SQUEEZE THEM!
HERO.
WHAT?
I WANT TO TOUCH YOU.

MAY I...
...TOUCH YOU?
WHAT?
WHY ARE YOU ASKING SO POLITELY?
I CAN'T?
I... I DON'T HAVE ANY STRANGE INTENTIONS!
YOU CAN EVEN TIE ME UP IF YOU WANT!
I DON'T BREAK MY CONTRACTS!
SURE.
HERE.


HERO.
YOU'RE WARM.
DEMON QUEEN.
YOUR HAND IS COOL.
IS IT COLD?
I'M SORRY.
NO.
IT FEELS NICE.

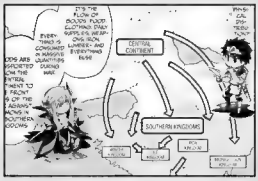
I AM YOURS, HERO.
AND I WILL BE YOURS, DEMON QUEEN.

THE END

CHAPTER 1
Become Mine, Hero!

ECONOMIC GROWTH and the IDENTITY OF WEALTH

The Demon Queen explains the key to change: the economy. Let's take a look at "economic growth and the uses of currency" and the "physical distribution" crucial to physical "wealth."



The money economy developed from bartering

While humans were still living primitive lives, people lived self-sufficient lives in small groups. As humans living in different environments began interacting with each other, people living near oceans traded fish and salt, and people living in mountains traded animal skins and vegetables, exchanging goods unavailable in each other's regions. This is the origin of the economy.

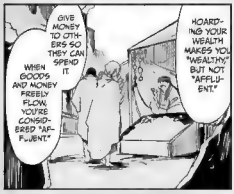
As people began exchanging a wider variety of goods, humans felt directly exchanging one good for another was becoming inconvenient. Additionally, the ease or difficult of acquiring a product led to differences in value. Currency was created as a tool to express the value of goods, and the money economy was born.

Naturally, with the appearance of currency, the need to directly exchange goods disappeared, but a new form of exchange was born in which only the difference in value of the goods exchanged needed to be paid. Additionally, even if different countries used different currencies, because trades could be made once an exchange rate was determined, countries that had introduced each other's currencies could trade with one another, conducting large-scale trades and further increasing the scale of the economy.

What is the definition of wealth?

In a money economy, it is important for the physical distribution system to operate normally. Using an exchange between person A and person B as an example, in order for A to sell his product, B must possess currency, and for B to acquire currency, A must purchase something from B. Because A and B have an interdependent relationship, if they do not purchase each other's products, they will both be ruined. In other words, ensuring the physical distribution system works benefits both parties.

In *Maoyu*, the Southern Kingdoms fighting the demons receive sizable donations from the Central Continent in exchange for providing security. The Southern Kingdoms use that money to import everyday necessities and war supplies from the Central Continent. While the exchange seems equal at first glance, the Central Continent living in peace can focus on production and use their money to fund additional developments, but the Southern Kingdoms are not only unable to develop their national production, but they are even losing human resources in the war.


GIVE MONEY TO OTHERS SO THEY CAN SPEND IT
WHEN GOODS AND MONEY FREELY FLOW, YOU'RE CONSIDERED "AFFLUENT."
HOARDING YOUR WEALTH MAKES YOU "WEALTHY" BUT NOT "AFFLUENT."

Countries are war high consumption markets and also stimulate the economy.

It is clear the Central Continent benefit more. Overall, they could be considered "wealthy" and "able to live decent lives."

WHAT SHOULD WE DO FIRST?
WELL...
FIRST WE SHOULD PUT ON DISGUISES TO CONCEAL OUR IDENTITIES.
A DISGUISE, HUH?
!
HUH?
IS SOMETHING WRONG?
THOSE HORNS COME OFF, HUH?
I THOUGHT THEY WERE REAL...
?

CHAPTER 2 Archenemy and Hero

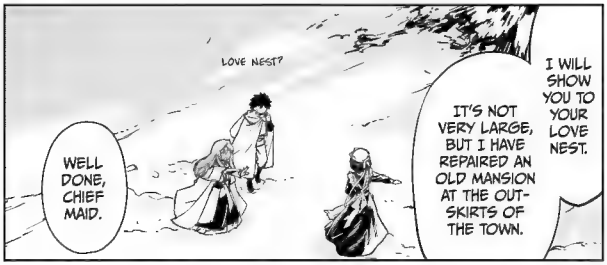
Please Make Me Human

I DIDN'T THINK MY LACK OF STAMINA WOULD BECOME A PROBLEM SO SOON!!
WELL...
YOU SAID YOU'D BE WEARING A DISGUISE, BUT YOU REALLY DO SEEM QUITE DIFFERENT.
REALLY?
THIS IS ACTUALLY CLOSER TO WHAT I NORMALLY WEAR.
WHAT?
IS SOMETHING WRONG?
THAT OUTFIT WAS PROVIDED FOR ME.
"YOU'RE RECEIVING A HERO! WEAR SOMETHING THAT WON'T EMBARRASS YOU AS THE DEMON QUEEN!"
THE CHIEF MAID BASICALLY FORCED IT ON ME.

THEY SHOULD HAVE ALREADY ENTERED THIS VILLAGE AND PREPARED A HOUSE TO SERVE AS OUR BASE.
I WONDER WHERE IT IS.
OH, UM...
AN OLD ATTEN-DANT.
WHO?
DEMON QUEEN!
DEMON QUEEN!
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.
AH.
I'VE BEEN LOOK-ING FOR YOU.
DEMON QUEEN!
KRUNCH
KRUNCH

ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE YOU.
THIS IS MY CHIEF MAID. SHE SUPERVISES ALL OF THE OTHER MAIDS.
I AM THE CHIEF MAID.
I HAVE LOOKED AFTER THE DEMON QUEEN SINCE SHE WAS A GIRL.
CHIEF MAID

YOU IDIOT!
DON'T SCREAM "DEMON QUEEN" IN A HUMAN VILLAGE!
THAT'S RIGHT.
YOU SHOULD BE CAREFUL.
YES, DEMON QUEEN.


I WILL SHOW YOU TO YOUR LOVE NEST.
IT'S NOT VERY LARGE, BUT I HAVE REPAIRED AN OLD MANSION AT THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE TOWN.
LOVE NEST?
WELL DONE, CHIEF MAID.

THE VILLA FORMERLY BELONGED TO A FAMILY OF FALLEN NOBLES.
IT'S A PRETTY BIG PLACE.
NOT AT ALL. IT'S A HUNDREDTH THE SIZE OF THE DEMON QUEEN'S CASTLE.
NATURALLY, I ACQUIRED IT THROUGH LEGITIMATE MEANS AND REPAIRED IT.
DON'T COMPARE IT TO A DUNGEON.
ACTUALLY, I USED TO LIVE THERE, BUT...

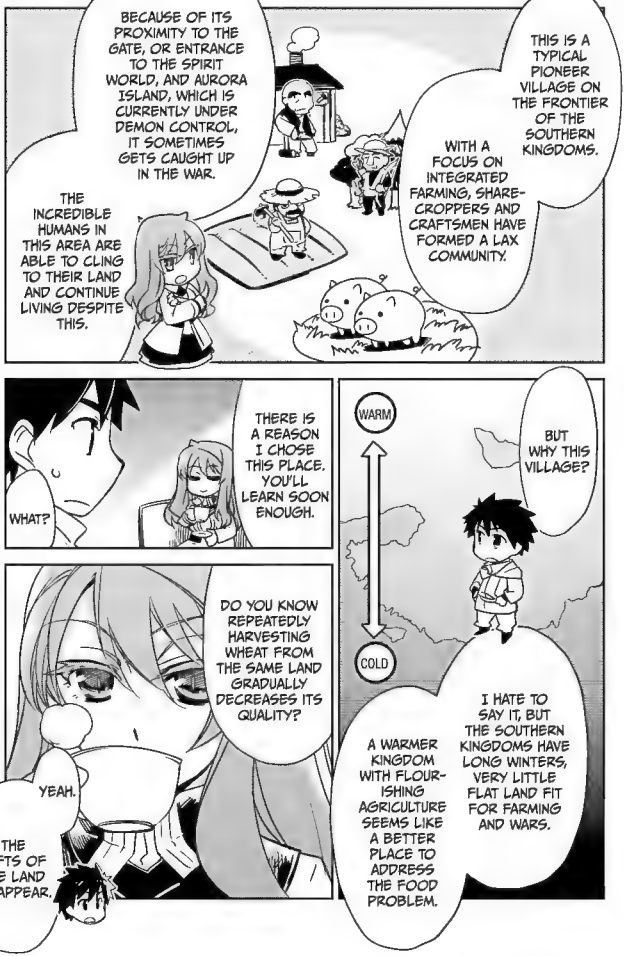
HERE YOU ARE.
THIS IS TEA WITH HONEY.
KLINK
チャ
THANK YOU.
DESPITE HOW IT SEEMS, MY CHIEF MAID IS ALSO MY RELATIVE.
REALLY?
DOES THAT MEAN SHE'S A SCHOLAR?
RATHER THAN SCHOLARS, WE ARE A FAMILY OF INDIVIDUALS WHO CANNOT SUPPRESS THEIR CURIOSITY.
WE ARE THE TYPE TO THOROUGHLY STUDY OUR SPECIALTIES.
AS I TOLD YOU BEFORE, MY SPECIALTY IS ECONOMICS...
BUT MY SPECIALTY IS THE WAY OF THE MAID!
THE WAY OF THE MAID IS A LIMITLESS PATH NEITHER GREATER NOR INFERIOR TO THE CHIVALRY OF MEN.
NEEDLESS TO SAY, IT INCLUDES POURING TEA, CLEANING, AND DOING THE LAUNDRY.
FROM PROTECTING ONE'S MASTER TO LEADING ARMIES ...
...WE FULFILL OUR MASTERS' EVERY DESIRE.
MAIDS ARE AMAZING!

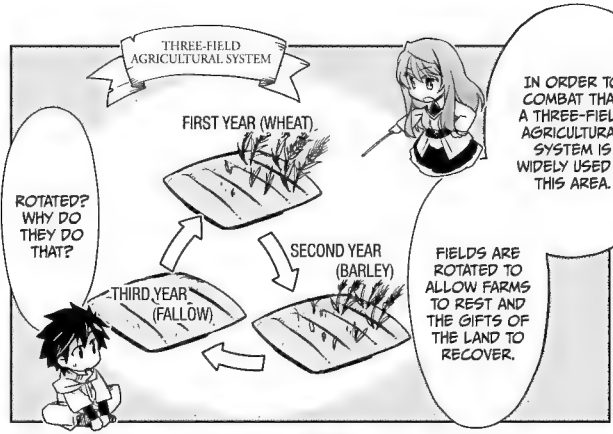
SPEAKING OF ARMIES, DEMON QUEEN...
...WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH YOUR ARMIES?
OH, RIGHT.
GLANCE
?
WE'LL SAY THE HERO AND I FACED OFF IN THE HALL OF THE DEMON QUEEN.
SPREAD A RUMOR WE WERE BOTH GRAVELY INJURED THERE.
I AM RECOVERING FROM MY INJURIES IN THE DEMON QUEEN'S CASTLE.
THE HERO'S FATE IS UNKNOWN.
SOME BELIEVE HE ESCAPED.
HOW ...
...DOES THAT SOUND, HERO?
THAT'S FINE.
AFTER ALL, I BELONG TO YOU NOW.

VERY WELL. I WILL HANDLE YOUR ARMIES.
DON'T TEASE HIM.
HEE HEE
MY, MY.
THREE YEARS, HUH?
KREEK
WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO DELAY THEM FOR THREE YEARS.
I INTEND TO SLOW THEM DOWN IN OTHER WAYS AS WELL.
THIS RUMOR SHOULD GIVE US ABOUT A YEAR.
IS THAT BELIEVABLE ENOUGH?
AS LONG AS YOU DRESS THE PART, SHOULDN'T IT BE EASY?
I TOLD THEM YOU ARE THE DAUGHTER OF A NOBLE FAMILY AND A WELL-KNOWN GRADUATE OF THE HOLY KINGDOM'S ACADEMY.
I HAVE INTRODUCED MYSELF TO THE IMPORTANT TOWNSFOLK BELOW THE VILLAGE CHIEFS.
WHAT KIND OF ARRANGEMENTS HAVE YOU MADE IN THIS TOWN?

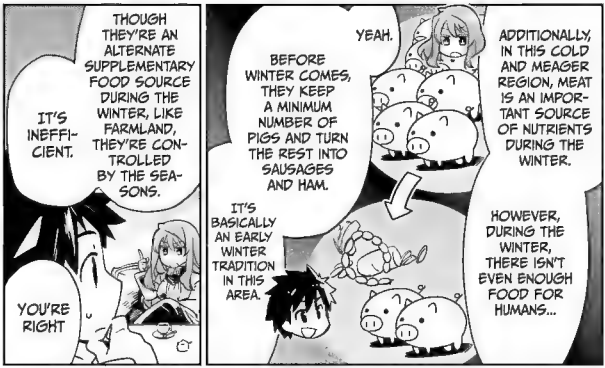
ARE THESE CLOTHES NOT APPROPRIATE?
THEY'RE COMFORTABLE.
THEY WILL NOT DO.
THE DAUGHTER OF A NOBLEMAN DRESSES FOR APPEARANCE OVER COMFORT.
THEY ARE PERPETUALLY TENSE FROM WEARING CLOTHES THAT DEMAND ATTENTION.
TENSE?
WHAT IS IT?
MAY I BORROW YOUR EAR?
HERO!
IS FLESH WITHOUT TENSION EXTRA FAT?
RAAAH
!

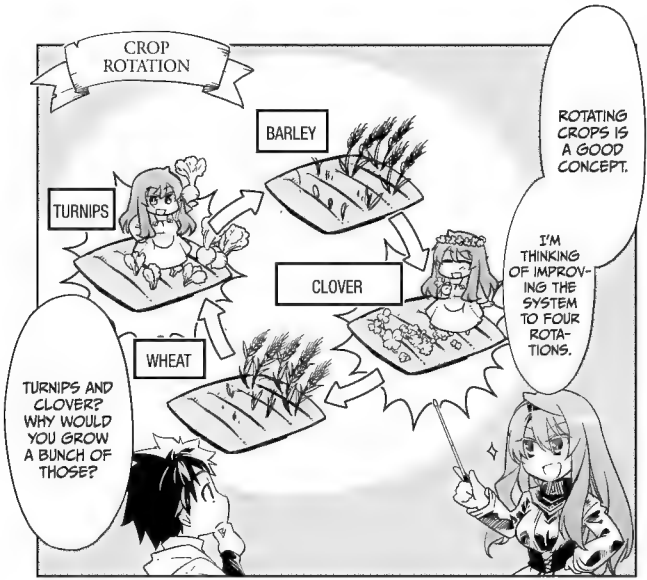
LISTEN TO ME!
WOULD ANYONE LIKE MORE TEA?
DOES IT RELAX AND GROW SOFT?
GRINN
WHAT DID YOU TELL HER?
IS IT EXTRA FAT?
IS THAT WHAT IT IS?
WELL, ANYWAY.
THE REASON I CHOSE THIS VILLAGE IS...
...BECAUSE I WANTED TO START WITH FOOD.
FOOD, HUH? THAT SOUNDS LIKE IT WILL TAKE A WHILE.
YES.
SPECIFICALLY, WE'LL HAVE TO IMPROVE THEIR AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM.
AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM?
THEIR FARMING METHODS.


BECAUSE OF ITS PROXIMITY TO THE GATE, OR ENTRANCE TO THE SPIRIT WORLD, AND AURORA ISLAND, WHICH IS CURRENTLY UNDER DEMON CONTROL, IT SOMETIMES GETS CAUGHT UP IN THE WAR.
THIS IS A TYPICAL PIONEER VILLAGE ON THE FRONTIER OF THE SOUTHERN KINGDOMS.
WITH A FOCUS ON INTEGRATED FARMING, SHARE-CROPPERS AND CRAFTSMEN HAVE FORMED A LAX COMMUNITY.
THE INCREDIBLE HUMANS IN THIS AREA ARE ABLE TO CLING TO THEIR LAND AND CONTINUE LIVING DESPITE THIS.
THERE IS A REASON I CHOSE THIS PLACE. YOU'LL LEARN SOON ENOUGH.
WHAT?
WARM
COLD
BUT WHY THIS VILLAGE?
I HATE TO SAY IT, BUT THE SOUTHERN KINGDOMS HAVE LONG WINTERS, VERY LITTLE FLAT LAND FIT FOR FARMING AND WARS.
A WARMER KINGDOM WITH FLOURISHING AGRICULTURE SEEMS LIKE A BETTER PLACE TO ADDRESS THE FOOD PROBLEM.
DO YOU KNOW REPEATEDLY HARVESTING WHEAT FROM THE SAME LAND GRADUALLY DECREASES ITS QUALITY?
YEAH.
THE GIFTS OF THE LAND DISAPPEAR.


THREE-FIELD AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM
FIRST YEAR (WHEAT)
SECOND YEAR (BARLEY)
THIRD YEAR (FALLOW)
IN ORDER TO COMBAT THAT, A THREE-FIELD AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM IS WIDELY USED IN THIS AREA.
FIELDS ARE ROTATED TO ALLOW FARMS TO REST AND THE GIFTS OF THE LAND TO RECOVER.
ROTATED? WHY DO THEY DO THAT?

CLEARING FORESTS AND WILDERNESS FOR FARMLAND REQUIRES A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF EFFORT.
THEY DEVISE METHODS TO USE THE SAME FARMLAND OVER AND OVER AGAIN.


ADDITIONALLY, IN THIS COLD AND MEAGER REGION, MEAT IS AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF NUTRIENTS DURING THE WINTER.
YEAH.
BEFORE WINTER COMES, THEY KEEP A MINIMUM NUMBER OF PIGS AND TURN THE REST INTO SAUSAGES AND HAM.
IT'S BASICALLY AN EARLY WINTER TRADITION IN THIS AREA.
HOWEVER, DURING THE WINTER, THERE ISN'T EVEN ENOUGH FOOD FOR HUMANS...
THOUGH THEY'RE AN ALTERNATE SUPPLEMENTARY FOOD SOURCE DURING THE WINTER, LIKE FARMLAND, THEY'RE CONTROLLED BY THE SEASONS.
IT'S INEFFICIENT.
YOU'RE RIGHT


CROP ROTATION
BARLEY
TURNIPS
CLOVER
WHEAT
ROTATING CROPS IS A GOOD CONCEPT.
I'M THINKING OF IMPROVING THE SYSTEM TO FOUR ROTATIONS.
TURNIPS AND CLOVER? WHY WOULD YOU GROW A BUNCH OF THOSE?

CLOVER IMPROVES THE RICHNESS OF THE SOIL AND CAN BE USED TO PASTURE PIGS AND SHEEP DURING THE SUMMER.
TURNIPS ARE USEFUL FOR FEEDING LIVESTOCK DURING THE WINTER.
THIS WAY, THEY'LL BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN THEIR NUMBER OF LIVESTOCK THROUGH THE WINTER.
I GET IT!

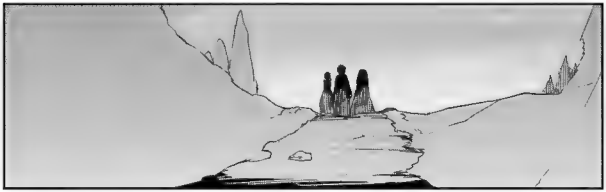
BASICALLY, THIS METHOD...
DON'T LEAVE FIELDS FALLOW...
DON'T MAKE FIELDS BARREN...
MAKE FOOD SOURCES OTHER THAN CROPS RICH...
...IS BASED ON THESE THREE IDEAS.
THAT'S WHY YOU CHOSE THIS VILLAGE.
YOU PUT A LOT OF THOUGHT INTO THIS, DEMON QUEEN.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THIS AGRICULTURAL METHOD WORKS BEST...
...IN A VILLAGE RAISING BOTH CROPS AND LIVESTOCK THAT'S SELF-SUFFICIENT TO A CERTAIN DEGREE.
IT'S NOT AS MEANINGFUL IN WARM REGIONS CAPABLE OF PRODUCING MASSIVE QUANTITIES OF ONLY WHEAT.
IT'S AN IDEA TO SAVE COLD AND IMPOVERISHED COMMUNITIES.
I SEE!
THAT'S EXACTLY RIGHT, HERO.

THE DIFFICULT PART IS REORGANIZING THE FARMLAND AND VILLAGE.
THESE TYPES OF TERRITORIAL DISPUTES OVER RECLAIMED LAND CAN EASILY BECOME POWER STRUGGLES.
I CAN SEE THAT.
THAT'S WHERE THE DEMONS COME IN.
DEMONS APPEAR AND BEGIN ATTACKING THE VILLAGE.
FRIGHTENING THE VILLAGERS SHOULD MAKE THEM FLEE.
IF WE HAVE THE DEMONS FIGHT THE KNIGHTS WHO COME AND THEN RETREAT...
...THE VILLAGERS WILL COME UNDER THE PROTECTION OF A FEUDAL LORD.
WE CAN EFFICIENTLY REORGANIZE THE FARMLAND AND CONSOLIDATE THE VILLAGE.

ARE YOU DISILLUSIONED, HERO?
NEEDLESS TO SAY, I WILL GO EASY ON THEM.
HOWEVER, THESE STRATEGIES ALWAYS COME WITH ACCIDENTS.
IT'S UNLIKELY BLOOD WON'T BE SPILLED.
BUT...

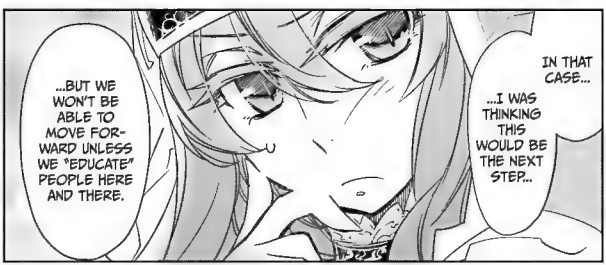
BUT SOME PEOPLE WILL BE SAVED, WON'T THEY?
IF YOUR AGRICULTURAL PLAN GOES WELL, THE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN WHO STARVE EVERY YEAR WILL MAKE IT TO SPRING, RIGHT?
THEN HUMANS CAN AFFORD TO END THE WAR, RIGHT?
THAT'S RIGHT.

THEN I...
...AM YOURS, DEMON QUEEN.
WHEWW
BESIDES ...
...DESPITE WHAT YOU SAY, YOU'LL DO YOUR BEST NOT TO LET ANYONE DIE.
URGH.
W-WE'LL EXPLAIN OUR AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM TO THE VILLAGE CHIEFS FIRST THING TOMORROW.
THE FIRST STEP..
...IS TO INCREASE THEIR SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN FOOD PRODUCTION.
NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ERADICATING HUNGER.

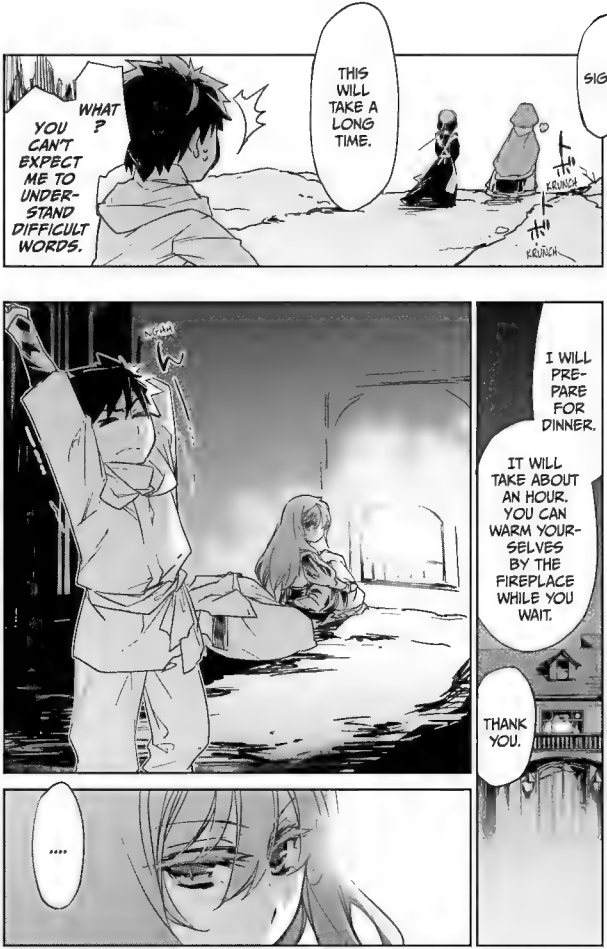


THEY WON'T REFUSE US OUTRIGHT...
...BUT IT DOESN'T FEEL AS THOUGH THEY'RE TAKING US SERIOUSLY.
THE VILLAGE CHIEFS THINK YOU'RE THE DAUGHTER OF A NOBLE FAMILY.
THEY CAN'T OUTWARDLY OPPOSE YOU.

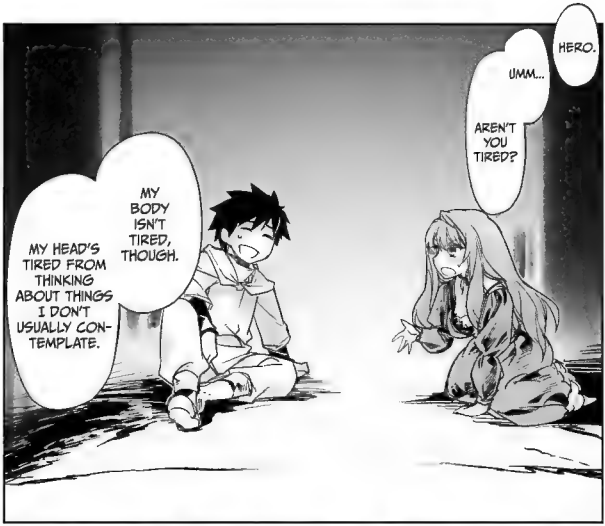
THIS IS GOING TO BE MORE DIFFICULT THAN WE EXPECTED.
YEAH.
GOOD WORK, EVERYONE
KRACK
SIGH


IN THAT CASE...
...I WAS THINKING THIS WOULD BE THE NEXT STEP...
...BUT WE WON'T BE ABLE TO MOVE FORWARD UNLESS WE "EDUCATE" PEOPLE HERE AND THERE.

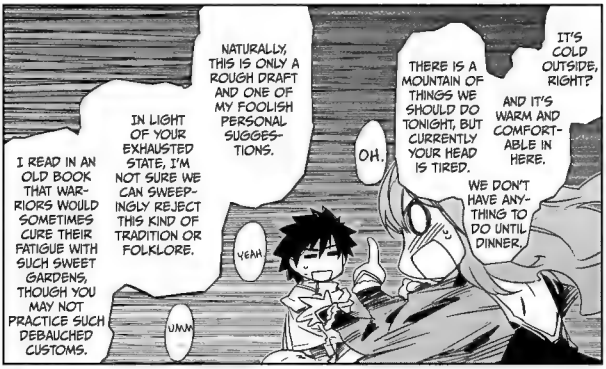
HOWEVER, EVEN IF OUR AGRICULTURAL REFORM IS SUCCESSFUL HERE...
...WE'LL NEED HELP SPREADING IT TO OTHER VILLAGES.
THAT'S WHAT I'M WORRIED ABOUT.
EDUCATE? WHAT YOU'RE SUGGESTING IS REASONABLE...
...BUT IT WILL BE EXPENSIVE.
EITHER WAY, WE HAVE TO DO IT EVENTUALLY.
SINCE IT WILL TAKE TIME, WE SHOULD START AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
WE'LL HAVE TO COME UP WITH AN IDEA.
WE COULD RECRUIT THE SONS OF THE WEALTHY AND ACCUMULATE RESULTS...
BY THE WAY, HOW DOES EDUCATION WORK IN THE HUMAN WORLD?
I'M NOT SURE.
WHAT'S EDUCATION, ANYWAY?
?


SIGH...
THIS WILL TAKE A LONG TIME.
KRUNCH
KRUNCH
WHAT ?
YOU CAN'T EXPECT ME TO UNDER-STAND DIFFICULT WORDS.
NGHH
I WILL PRE-PARE FOR DINNER.
IT WILL TAKE ABOUT AN HOUR. YOU CAN WARM YOUR-SELVES BY THE FIREPLACE WHILE YOU WAIT.
THANK YOU.
....

HEY, HERO.
YEAH?
UMM... WHY DON'T YOU COME OVER HERE? THE FIRE-PLACE IS WARM.
S-SURE.
KRAKKLE パチ
ゴ
ROOOAR
YOU'RE RIGHT. IT'S WARM.
SHOULD WE ADD MORE FIRE-WOOD?


HERO.
UMM...
AREN'T YOU TIRED?
MY BODY ISN'T TIRED, THOUGH.
MY HEAD'S TIRED FROM THINKING ABOUT THINGS I DON'T USUALLY CONTEMPLATE.

I SEE.
YES.
UMM...
WELL, YOU KNOW.
I HAVE A PROPOSITION FOR YOU.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO HEAR IT?
?
WHAT IS IT?
JUST SPIT IT OUT.
GULP!!


IT'S COLD OUTSIDE, RIGHT?
AND IT'S WARM AND COMFORTABLE IN HERE.
THERE IS A MOUNTAIN OF THINGS WE SHOULD DO TONIGHT, BUT CURRENTLY YOUR HEAD IS TIRED.
OH.
WE DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO UNTIL DINNER.
NATURALLY, THIS IS ONLY A ROUGH DRAFT AND ONE OF MY FOOLISH PERSONAL SUGGESTIONS.
YEAH
IN LIGHT OF YOUR EXHAUSTED STATE, I'M NOT SURE WE CAN SWEEPINGLY REJECT THIS KIND OF TRADITION OR FOLKLORE.
I READ IN AN OLD BOOK THAT WARRIORS WOULD SOMETIMES CURE THEIR FATIGUE WITH SUCH SWEET GARDENS, THOUGH YOU MAY NOT PRACTICE SUCH DEBAUCHED CUSTOMS.
UMM

IN OTHER WORDS ...
...WHAT ...
...DO YOU WANT TO DO?
I WANT YOU TO REST YOUR HEAD ON MY THIGHS.

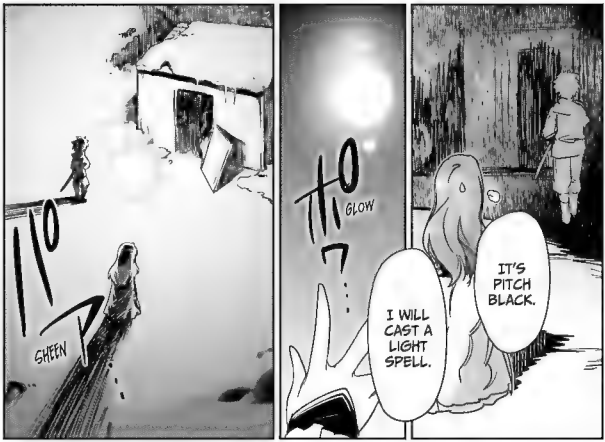
....
ARE YOU SURE THIS IS WHAT YOU WANT?
WHIMPER
はわ
WHIMPER
あっ

O-OF...
OF COURSE.
THIS IS WHAT I WANT.
DO YOU NOT LIKE THIS, HERO?
I DON'T MIND.
IN FACT, IT ACTUALLY FEELS REALLY NICE.

I AM YOURS, DEMON QUEEN.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO HOLD BACK.
R-REALLY?
YOU'RE RIGHT.
IN THAT CASE ...

IN THAT CASE ...
HERO ...
DEMON QUEEN?
BA-DUMP
BA-DUMP
BA-DUMP
BA-DUMP

KRASH
WHAT WAS THAT SOUND?
RUSTLE
IT'S IN THE BACK...
IT CAME FROM THE SHED!
KLINK
DASH
HEY!
WAIT!


IT'S PITCH BLACK.
I WILL CAST A LIGHT SPELL.
GLOW
SHEEN

CHIL-
DREN?
THEY'RE
WEARING
NOTHING
BUT UNDER-
GARMENTS.
TRAMPLE
TRAMPLE
TRAMPLE
TRAMPLE
MY, MY.
THEY FOUND
THEIR WAY
BACK IN.
CHIEF
MAID.
WHO
ARE
THESE
PEO-
PLE?
TWITCH
RUNAWAY
SLAVES.

EXCUSE ME.
THEY ARE "SERFS."
SLAVERY IS FORBIDDEN!
THERE SHOULD BE NO SLAVES IN THIS KINGDOM!
THAT'S RIDICULOUS!
THEY MUST HAVE ESCAPED FROM THE NEARBY VILLAGE. IT HAPPENS SOMETIMES.
THEY CAN HAVE HOMES AND POSSESS THEIR OWN AGRICULTURAL TOOLS.
THEY CAN EVEN LIVE WITH THEIR FAMILIES.
UNLIKE SLAVES, SERFS CAN OWN PROPERTY.
SERFS?
UH...
EXCUSE ME...
THEY MUST WORK THE FARMS OF LANDOWNERS...
...WITHOUT ANY CHOICE IN THE MATTER.
HOWEVER, THEY CANNOT CHOOSE OR CHANGE THEIR PROFESSION FREELY.

HOW HAVE YOU DEALT WITH THEM UNTIL NOW?
IT IS A SERIOUS CRIME FOR A SERF TO RUN AWAY.
I REPORTED THEM IMMEDIATELY AND HAD THEM TAKEN AWAY.
WE WON'T CAUSE YOU ANY TROUBLE.
PLEASE.
LET US STAY ONE NIGHT.
WE...
WE'LL LEAVE IN THE MORNING.
SKWEEZ!
I DESPISE INSECTS.
IT'S AS THOUGH THEIR WINGS HAVE BEEN TORN OFF. I CAN'T STAND TO LOOK AT THEM.
THOSE WHO CANNOT SEIZE THEIR OWN FATES ARE INSECTS.
DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S TOO HARSH?

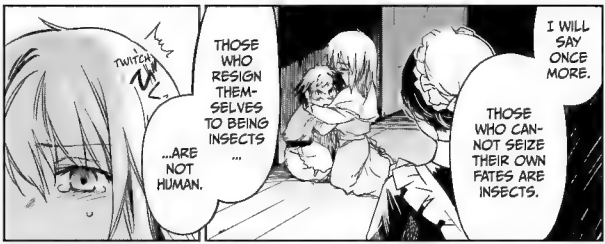
DEMON QUEEN.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
IT IS A SMALL SACRIFICE FOR A GREATER CAUSE.
IT WOULD NOT BE GOOD TO DAMAGE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS OVER THIS.
!!
VERY WELL.
WE WILL WAIT UNTIL TOMORROW MORNING TO REPORT THEM.
BOIL SOME WATER.
SURELY WE MUST HAVE SOME BETTER CLOTHES.
DON'T ARGUE WITH ME. THAT IS WHAT WE'LL DO THIS TIME.
I'VE ALREADY DECIDED.
UGH.
I'M NOT VERY GOOD WITH THIS KIND OF THING.
NEITHER AM I.

KLIK
UMM...
THANK YOU FOR THESE WONDERFUL CLOTHES...
...AND MEAL.
YOU'VE ALREADY BEEN SO KIND TO US...
...BUT PLEASE.
WE'LL RUN.
PLEASE WAIT...
...A LITTLE WHILE AFTER DAWN.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
YOU DON'T HAVE PROPER SHOES.
YOUR CLOTHES ARE THE BARE MINIMUM.
YOU HAVE NEITHER MONEY NOR TOOLS.
WERE YOU PLANNING ON GOING TO THE CITY TO BEG?
URGH...
WAAAH
OH.
HEY.

ISN'T THERE ...
...SOMETHING WE CAN DO?
NO.
THE LIFE OF A SLAVE IS MISERABLE.
HIC
THEY CANNOT DO ANYTHING.
THEY HAVE NO HOPE.
HIC
BUT...
...WHAT THEY DO IS NO DIFFERENT FROM A MAID.
THEY ACCEPT THE WILL OF THEIR MASTER AND OBEY ANYTHING THEIR MASTER SAYS.
THEY SACRIFICE THEIR LIVES TO MAKE THE DREAMS OF THEIR MASTERS COME TRUE.
WE ARE NOT SO DIFFERENT FROM SLAVES.

CHIEF MAID.
I'VE NEVER THOUGHT OF YOU AS A SLAVE.
YES, DEMON QUEEN.
I DO NOT RECALL YOU EVER...
...TREATING ME LIKE ONE.
BUT THAT IS ALL THE MORE REASON WHY...
...I CANNOT STAND TO LOOK AT THEM.
THEY DO THE SAME WORK I DO...
...BUT THEY CANNOT SEIZE THEIR FATES WITH THEIR OWN HANDS.
THAT WEAKNESS...
NO!
YOU'RE WRONG!

YOU'RE WRONG!
YOU'RE A MEAN LADY WITH GLASSES!
WE RAN AWAY!
IT'S NOT AS THOUGH WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING!
WE'RE GOING TO THE CAPITAL TO LIVE TOGETHER!
LET US GENEROUSLY CALL YOUR ENTHUSIASM EFFORT.
YOU HAVE IMPOSED ON OUR KINDNESS AND INCONVENIENCED US.
IS THAT HOW YOU DO THINGS?


I WILL SAY ONCE MORE.
THOSE WHO CANNOT SEIZE THEIR OWN FATES ARE INSECTS.
THOSE WHO RESIGN THEMSELVES TO BEING INSECTS ...
...ARE NOT HUMAN.
TWITCH

APOL-
OGIZE.
WE HAVE
INCONVE-
NIENCED
THE NOBLE
PEOPLE...
...WHO...
...WHO
LIVE
HERE.
WE'RE
SORRY.
HIC
HIC
HIC
GOOD.
HIC
NO.
I
DON'T
WANT
TO GO
BACK.
I'M
SCARED.
HIC
HIC
BE
QUIET.
IS
THAT
ALL?
PLEASE
...

PLEASE ...
...MAKE US HUMAN.
I BE-LIEVE ...
...YOU ARE...
...MY DESTINY.
WHEN YOU BOW, YOU MUST NOT GROVEL ON YOUR HANDS AND KNEES.
LIGHTLY HOLD YOUR SKIRT WITH YOUR FINGER-TIPS.
WHILE BEAUTI-FULLY DRAPING YOUR SKIRT...
... PERFORM A SINGLE GRACEFUL BOW.

DEMON QUEEN.
COMPARED TO YOUR CASTLE, THIS MANSION IS A SHACK, BUT I CANNOT MANAGE THIS PLACE ALONE.
MAY I HIRE ADDITIONAL MAIDS?

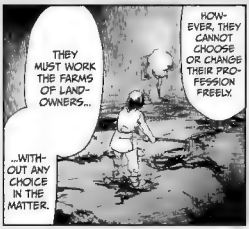
ARE YOU SURE, CHIEF MAID?
YOU SAID YOU HATED THEM.
I DESPISE INSECTS.
NO ONE IN THIS WORLD DESPISES MAIDS...
...EVEN IF SHE IS FLEDG-LING MAID.

WOULD THAT BE ALL RIGHT, DEMON QUEEN?
I WILL ALLOW IT.
TRAIN THESE GIRLS WELL.
SCRRCH
SNAP
LET'S GO.
OKAY.

THE END CHAPTER 2
Please Make Me Human

On SOCIAL STATUS within STRATIFIED SOCIETIES

The Ruling Class and Ruled Class of the "Stratified Society" of the Middle Ages, and the Existence of "Serfs" of the Maid Sisters.


THEY MUST WORK THE FARMS OF LAND-OWNERS...
...WITH-OUT ANY CHOICE IN THE MATTER.
HOW-EVER, THEY CANNOT CHOOSE OR CHANGE THEIR PRO-FESSION FREELY.

The luxurious lives of the ruling class are supported by the masses, including serfs.

The History of the Birth of the Class System

Historically, stratified societies were born after humans began living in groups. At first, experienced and knowledgeable elders were installed as leaders, but as groups began quarreling with one another, stronger individuals were looked to for leadership. In exchange for leading the group and protecting the people from foreign enemies, these leaders were separated from production and eventually became landowners claiming their group's territory as their own.

At this point, differences in social status between the masses were born. A person's ability to arm himself and participate in defending his territory became important, and those who risked their lives fighting enemies received a higher social status. Additionally, the custom of using prisoners of war as slaves was born, and the differences in social status among the masses widened.

When humans began forming kingdoms, kings emerged as even more powerful leaders. Once kings became the pinnacle of human social structures, administrative officials appointed by the king oversaw regions as feudal lords, and a system of rule in which landlords managed the local people was established. Under the ruling class, the people's social status became fixed, and the "stratified society" was born.

Those belonging to the aforementioned status are referred to as nobles.

Serfs: The Work Force Cultivating the Land of Landowners

While landowners, including nobles, own land, they do not cultivate their land themselves. This is how serfdom was born.

Some serfs tried to escape, but many of them were ultimately taken back.

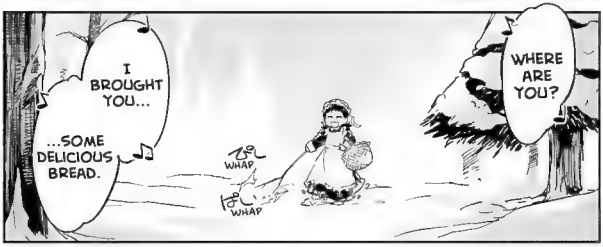
Serfs are a work force who exclusively cultivate land and were viewed as possessions of the landowner. They were treated as part of the land they cultivated, and when land was sold, its serfs were sold with it.

Therefore, while they were allowed to have homes, farming equipment, and families, they were not allowed to move, and those who tried to escape were punished harshly. Naturally, because everything they produced is collected, they were practically livestock with no hope of independence.

Behind the sisters who escaped into the Demon Queen's mansion and begged to be made human is the backdrop of the harsh reality surrounding serfs.

FIRST TIME WEARING MAID CLOTHES

HERO.
HERO.
WHERE IS...
...THE HERO?
MAOYU
Archenemy and Hero
CHAPTER 3

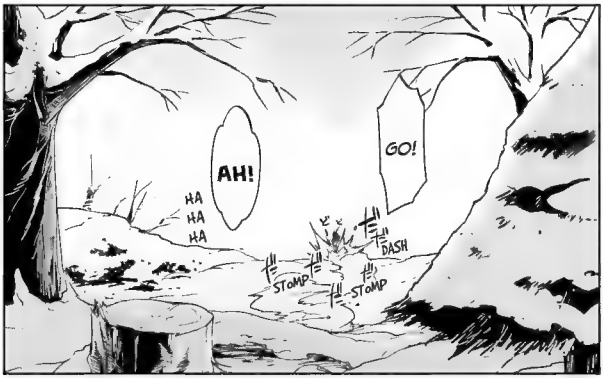

I BROUGHT YOU...
...SOME DELICIOUS BREAD.
WHAP
WHAP
WHERE ARE YOU?

TMP TMP TMP
WHERE WERE YOU?
I FLEW HERE USING DISPLACE-MENT MAGIC.
YOUR VOICE WAS RINGING THROUGH-OUT THE WHOLE FOREST.
AH!
WHOOSH
HEY.
THANKS FOR BRINGING THAT.
KRUNCH

TA-DA!
TODAY'S LUNCH OF WALNUT BREAD AND OMELETS WITH ONIONS AND BACON.
THAT LOOKS GOOD.
MY SISTER MADE IT.
I'M UN-PRESSED.
SHE'S MAKING GOOD PROGRESS LEARNING HER WORK.
THANKS FOR THE...
DROOL
SLURP
WANT TO EAT WITH ME?
YEAH!
HERO, WERE YOU WORKING IN THE FOREST?
YEAH. SINCE THIS MORNING, I GOT TWO BOARS AND ONE BEAR.
THIS PART OF THE FOREST HAS BECOME PRETTY SAFE.

BOARS?
STEW! BOAR STEW!
YOUNGER MAID SISTER
BOAR STEW, HUH? THAT'S PRETTY GOOD.
YOU'VE GOT QUITE THE APPETITE.
HAVING LOTS OF FOOD MAKES ME HAPPY.
WARM EVERY DAY.
CLEAN CLOTHES.
A SOFT BED.
ALWAYS WITH MY SISTER.
THAT'S HAPPINESS.
....
WHAT'S WRONG?
I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT HOW USELESS HEROES ARE.
I REALLY REALIZE THAT NOW.

I WOULD ALWAYS TALK ABOUT PEACE...
...BUT I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT PEACE WAS...
...OR HOW TO BRING IT ABOUT.
I HAD NEVER EVEN THOUGHT...
...WHAT I WOULD DO ONCE WE HAD PEACE.
MUNDA
THAT'S TOUGH.
SKUMP
YEAH, IT'S TOUGH.
OH, RIGHT. THIS AFTERNOON, WE'RE TRAINING WITH SWORDS.
THAT'S TODAY, HUH?
IN THAT CASE ...
...WE'D BETTER HURRY BACK.
YEAH!
WHOA.
WHOOMPH

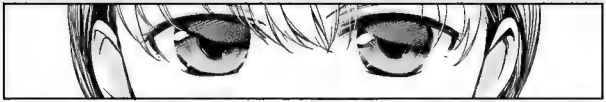


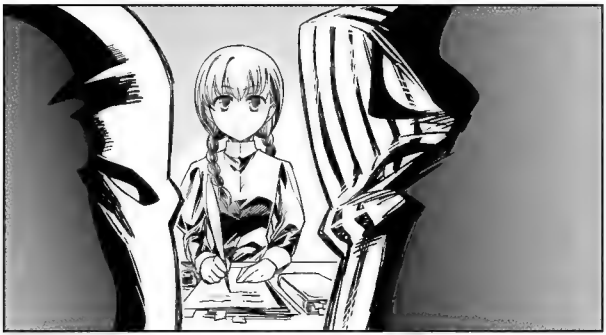
CHAPTER 3 Archenemy and Hero

Having Lots of Food Makes Me Very Happy

YOU KNEW BEFOREHAND YOU HAD A LESSON.
YOU SHOULD WORK QUICKLY SO YOU'RE NOT LATE.
YES, MA'AM.
I'LL BE CAREFUL.
I'M SORRY.
I'LL STOP NOW.
OLDER MAID SISTER
I'M FINISHED.
PLEASE INSPECT MY WORK.
GOOD.
IS IT DIFFICULT TO MANAGE BOTH WORKING AND STUDYING?

NO.
I'M FINE.
I HOPE THINGS CONTINUE AS THEY ARE.
VERY WELL.

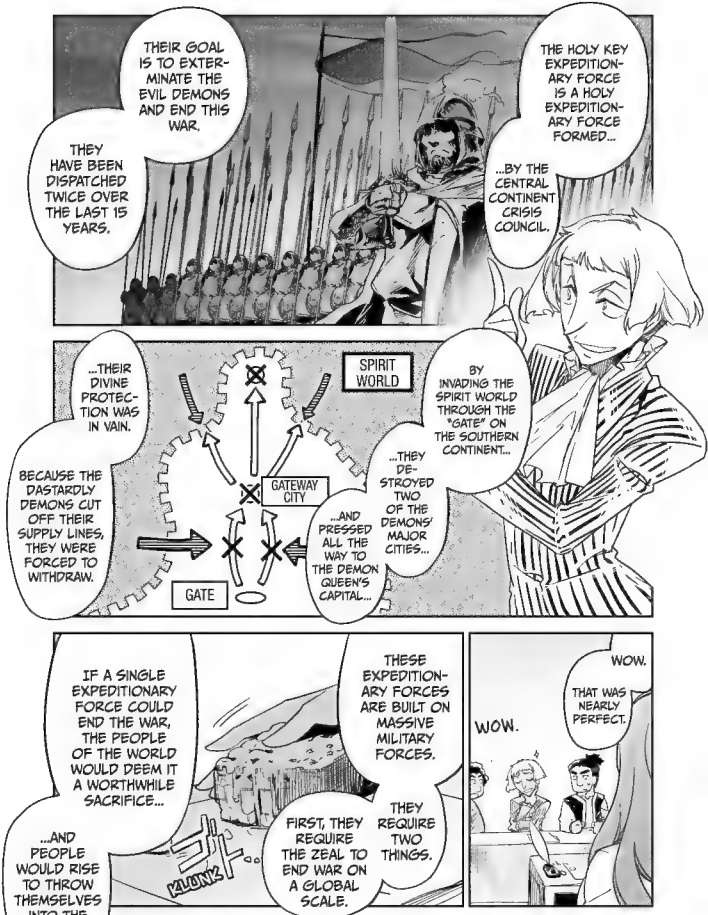




AND THAT...
...IS HOW THE CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION OF THE SOUTHERN KINGDOMS AFFECTS THE LARGE SCALE OF WAR.

UMM
MERCHANT'S SON
SKRICCH
SKRICCH
NOBLE'S SON
SOLDIER'S SON
...SINCE ANCIENT TIMES, THE ATTRITION RATE AT WHICH AN ARMY IS WIPED OUT IS...
WHILE IT'S NOT MY AREA OF EXPERTISE...
TAP TAP TAP
...ABOUT 30 PERCENT.
THAT'S THREE TENTHS.
WE WILL FIGHT UNTIL THE VERY LAST MAN!

DOES ANYONE HAVE ANY QUES-TIONS?
SPORADIC ENGAGEMENTS AND HOLDING STRONG POSI-TIONS ARE THE FUNDAMENTALS IN THE CURRENT BATTLE AGAINST THE DEMON ARMIES.
KLUNK
THERE-FORE...
...IT IS DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN THIS FRONT LINE SET BY THE STANDING ARMY AND MERCE-NARY FORCES.
YES.
THAT'S AN EXCEP-TION.
WHAT ABOUT THE HOLY KEY EXPEDI-TIONARY FORCE?
TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT THE HOLY KEY EXPE-DITIONARY FORCE.
UMM...
YOU, THE NOBLE'S SON.
WHAT?
OKAY.

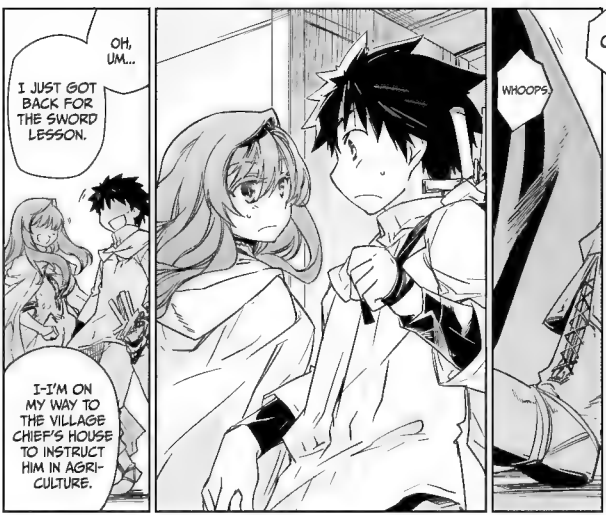

THEIR GOAL IS TO EXTERMINATE THE EVIL DEMONS AND END THIS WAR.
THEY HAVE BEEN DISPATCHED TWICE OVER THE LAST 15 YEARS.
THE HOLY KEY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE IS A HOLY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE FORMED...
...BY THE CENTRAL CONTINENT CRISIS COUNCIL.
SPIRIT WORLD
GATEWAY CITY
GATE
...THEIR DIVINE PROTECTION WAS IN VAIN.
BECAUSE THE DASTARDLY DEMONS CUT OFF THEIR SUPPLY LINES, THEY WERE FORCED TO WITHDRAW.
BY INVADING THE SPIRIT WORLD THROUGH THE "GATE" ON THE SOUTHERN CONTINENT...
...THEY DESTROYED TWO OF THE DEMONS' MAJOR CITIES...
...AND PRESSED ALL THE WAY TO THE DEMON QUEEN'S CAPITAL...
IF A SINGLE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE COULD END THE WAR, THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD WOULD DEEM IT A WORTHWHILE SACRIFICE...
...AND PEOPLE WOULD RISE TO THROW THEMSELVES INTO THE BATTLE.
KLUNK
THESE EXPEDITIONARY FORCES ARE BUILT ON MASSIVE MILITARY FORCES.
THEY REQUIRE TWO THINGS.
FIRST, THEY REQUIRE THE ZEAL TO END WAR ON A GLOBAL SCALE.
WOW.
WOW.
THAT WAS NEARLY PERFECT.

THE OTHER REQUIREMENT IS FINANCIAL BACKING.
BOTH SOCIETY AND ACTS OF WAR CANNOT EXIST WITHOUT FINANCIAL SUPPORT.
HUMANS STARVE TO DEATH WITHOUT FOOD.
KLINK

TEACHER.
YOU CANNOT WIN A WAR WITH AN ABACUS.
SOMETIMES THERE ARE THINGS MORE IMPORTANT THAN MONEY OR FOOD.
ARE YOU SURE?
BANG

STARVATION IS MERELY A LACK OF WILLPOWER.
THE PEOPLE UNDER A LANDOWNER'S PROTECTION NEVER STARVE.
YOU'VE NEVER BEEN HUNGRY.
RING
RING

MISS. THE LESSON IS OVER.
IT'S THAT TIME ALREADY?
COME ON. LET'S GO BACK TO WORK.
OKAY!
SISTER. LET'S HAVE BOAR STEW TONIGHT!
YOU'RE RIGHT. WE'LL ASK THE CHIEF MAID ABOUT IT LATER.
TOMORROW WE'LL DISCUSS THE MILITARY SITUATION OF THE ANTARCTIC OCEAN.
KLATTER
KLATTER
KLATTER
THAT'S ALL FOR TODAY.
IN THE AFTERNOON, THE SWORDSMAN WILL COME TO INTRODUCE YOU TO SWORDS.
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS!
TODAY'S YOUR LUCKY DAY.
WHAT?
WHAP

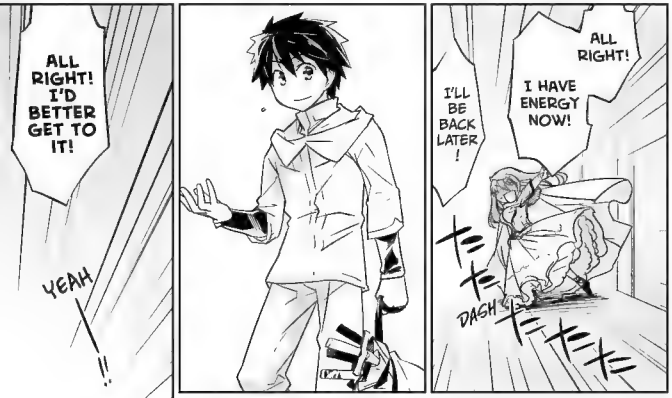

OH.
WHOOPS.
OH, UM...
I JUST GOT BACK FOR THE SWORD LESSON.
I-I'M ON MY WAY TO THE VILLAGE CHIEF'S HOUSE TO INSTRUCT HIM IN AGRICULTURE.

THE SONS ARE ALREADY HEADING TO THE BACKYARD.
RE-AL-LY?
SEE YOU LATER, THEN.
KLINK
WHAT'S WRONG? YOU LOOK TIRED.
I AM TIRED.

WHY DID I HAVE TO BRING UP EDUCATION?
I HAD NO IDEA TEACHING HUMAN CHILDREN COULD BE SO EXHAUSTING.
THEY'RE PRACTICALLY ANIMALS.
YOU CAN'T ARGUE OR NEGOTIATE WITH THEM.
WHY ARE THEY SO PROUD?
BECAUSE THEY'RE NOBLE OR WEALTHY.
MAYBE I'LL TURN THEM ALL INTO FROGS.
RUMBLE ゴゴゴゴ
HEY, NOW.
RIBBIT
RIBBIT
TSK.
DON'T DO THAT.
ANYWAY, WORK HARD.
KLANK
OH.
HERO...
WHAT IS IT?
I'M TIRED.
YOU KNOW...
...I'M LACKING ENERGY.

WILL YOU GIVE ME ENERGY?
UH...
SURE.
BA-DUMP
BA-DUMP
?
GLOW
SIGH
GLOW
WHAT IS THIS?
IT'S HEALING MAGIC.
DO YOU FEEL A LITTLE BETTER?

SMUSH
GOAD


ALL RIGHT! I'D BETTER GET TO IT!
YEAH!!
I'LL BE BACK LATER!
ALL RIGHT! I HAVE ENERGY NOW!
DASH

KLINK
ひょい
FWSSH
KNK
KNK
SWSSH
YAH!
HNG!
SWSSH
KLINK

YUP.
YOU... YOU BEAT ME.
WHUD
HOW IS MY SWORDS-MANSHIP?
HMM. WELL...
YOU'RE JUST SWING-ING YOUR SWORD LIKE "RAAARGH" RIGHT NOW.
LIKE THIS
MAYBE IT WOULD BE BETTER...
...IF YOU WERE MORE LIKE "SWOOSH" OR "SWISH."
GET IT?
AND THIS.
??
SWORDS-MAN, COULD YOU EXPLAIN MORE CLEARLY?
NICE!
I KNOW! COULD YOU TEACH US A KILLER MOVE?
HMMM...
A KILLER MOVE THAT'S EASY TO UNDER-STAND?
HOW ABOUT THIS?
HOLD YOUR SWORD AT YOUR HIP.
CLENCH
GATHER YOUR STRENGTH AROUND YOUR STOMACH.

AND JUST SLASH, YOU KNOW?
RIGHT? WASN'T THAT EASY?
SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE

FWSSH

....

ANY KINGDOM WOULD PAY A HIGH SALARY FOR YOUR SKILLS!
YOU COULD MAKE A NAME FOR YOURSELF ON YOUR SWORD ALONE!
EVERY BOY HOPES TO BECOME YOU.

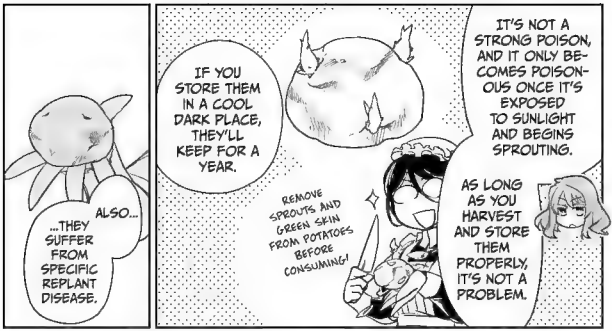
TRULY.
YOU'RE TOO IMPRESSIVE.
WOW.
YOU CERTAINLY ARE IMPRESSIVE, SWORDSMAN!

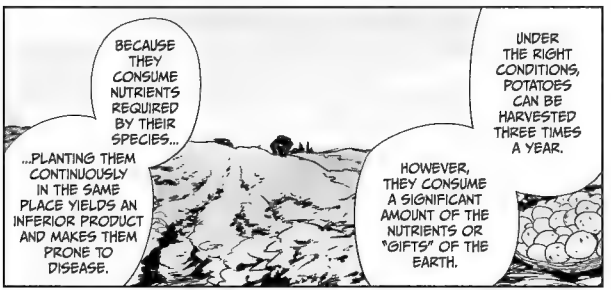
I WASN'T EXPECTING YOU TO SAY THE SAME KINDS OF THINGS AS THE SCHOLAR.
HA HA
HA HA HA
EVEN IF YOU CAN DEFEAT YOUR ENEMIES WITH SWORDS...
...YOU CANNOT GROW WHEAT.
YOU CAN'T EVEN SAVE SICK CHILDREN.
THE DEMON... THE SCHOLAR ...
...IS FAR MORE AMAZING THAN I AM.
WHAT SHE'S TRYING TO DO...
WHAT SHE'S TRYING TO TEACH YOU...
...IS "SOMETHING" MY SWORD CAN NEVER HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH.
I STILL DON'T KNOW...
...WHAT I CAN DO.
SWORDSMAN?

IT'S SAD HOW MUCH WEIGHT AUTHORITY CARRIES.
THE VILLAGERS SUDDENLY BECAME COOPERATIVE ONCE WE TOOK IN THE NOBLEMEN'S SONS AND GAINED PRESTIGE.
KRACKLE
THEY'RE GOING TO BEGIN TESTING THE NEW AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM THIS SPRING ON A SMALL SCALE.
SNAP!
THEY SAY NOBLES AND COMMON FOLK ARE NOT SO FAR APART IN THE SOUTHERN KINGDOMS.
COMPARED TO THE CENTRAL CONTINENT, THERE'S PRACTICALLY NO DIFFERENCE IN STATUS.
BY THE WAY...
...WHY ARE WE SITTING LIKE THIS?
DRAPE
WHY NOT?
I STAYED OUT LATE LECTURING THE VILLAGE CHIEFS ON AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS AND WALKED HOME THROUGH THE SNOW!
I AT LEAST DESERVE THIS PRIVILEGE!
I DON'T MIND

BUT WE FINALLY TOOK OUR FIRST STEP.
HOW MANY YEARS UNTIL WE SEE RESULTS?
WE'LL SEE RESULTS STARTING NEXT YEAR...
...BECAUSE I'VE ACQUIRED A SECRET WEAPON.
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
WHAT IS THAT LUMP?
IT'S THIS.
IT'S A CROP KNOWN AS THE POTATO.
THIS IS A PLANT.
IT LOOKS LIKE THIS BECAUSE IT'S BEEN DUG OUT OF THE GROUND...
...BUT THESE ROUND PARTS FORM UNDER-GROUND.
HUH.
THAT'S NOT MUCH OF A REAC-TION.
BUT THIS WILL SURPRISE YOU.

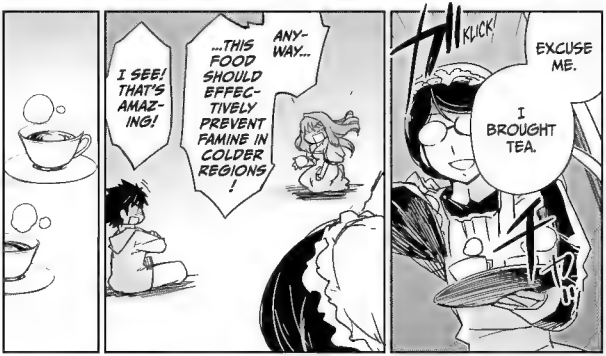
SERIOUSLY? IS IT SOME KIND OF MIRACLE FOOD?
NO. IT'S A FOOD OF THE SPIRIT WORLD.
ADDITIONALLY, THIS EXCEPTIONAL CROP CAN BE GROWN IN INFERTILE LAND OR EVEN THE HARD GROUND OF COLDER REGIONS.
FURTHERMORE, A QUICK CALCULATION REVEALS THE YIELD PER AREA IS...
...THREE TIMES THAT OF WHEAT.
THIS IS A RATHER DELICIOUS AND HIGHLY NUTRITIOUS FOOD.
BECAUSE THE EDIBLE PORTION GROWS BELOW GROUND, IT'S LESS SUSCEPTIBLE TO DAMAGE FROM BIRDS.
THOUGH THEY MAY MAKE CONTACT UNDER UNFORTUNATE TERMS... ...CONTACT IS STILL CONTACT.
CONTACT BETWEEN DIFFERENT CULTURES AND CIVILIZATIONS... ...CAN GIVE BIRTH TO GREAT BENEFITS.
!?
YOU CAN'T EAT THAT!
FIRST, IT'S POISONOUS.
IT'S NOT AS THOUGH THE POTATO HAS NO WEAKNESSES.
IT'S COMPLICATED.

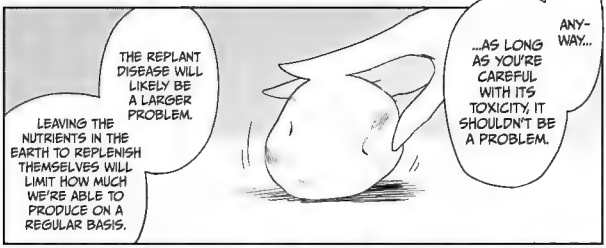

ALSO...
...THEY SUFFER FROM SPECIFIC REPLANT DISEASE.
IF YOU STORE THEM IN A COOL DARK PLACE, THEY'LL KEEP FOR A YEAR.
REMOVE SPROUTS AND GREEN SKIN FROM POTATOES BEFORE CONSUMING!
IT'S NOT A STRONG POISON, AND IT ONLY BECOMES POISONOUS ONCE IT'S EXPOSED TO SUNLIGHT AND BEGINS SPROUTING.
AS LONG AS YOU HARVEST AND STORE THEM PROPERLY, IT'S NOT A PROBLEM.

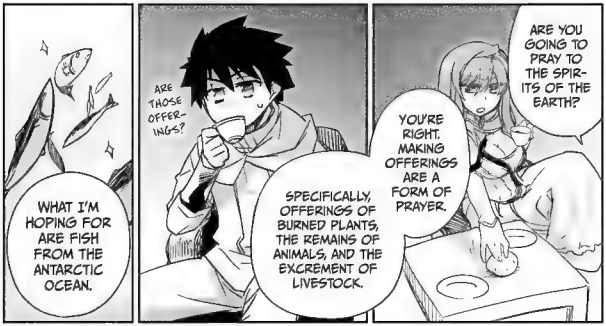

BECAUSE THEY CONSUME NUTRIENTS REQUIRED BY THEIR SPECIES...
...PLANTING THEM CONTINUOUSLY IN THE SAME PLACE YIELDS AN INFERIOR PRODUCT AND MAKES THEM PRONE TO DISEASE.
UNDER THE RIGHT CONDITIONS, POTATOES CAN BE HARVESTED THREE TIMES A YEAR.
HOWEVER, THEY CONSUME A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF THE NUTRIENTS OR "GIFTS" OF THE EARTH.

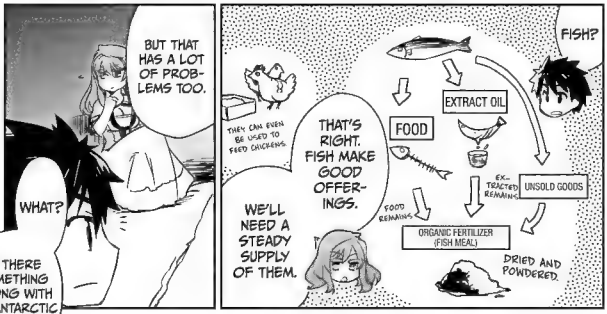
WHEN DID WE GET SO FAR AWAY FROM THE FIREPLACE?
WHO KNOWS?
HUH?
WOW
I WOULDN'T EXPECT LESS FROM A PLANT OF THE SPIRIT WORLD.
THAT'S KIND OF IMPRESSIVE.
HEH

YOU PROBABLY PUSHED ME.
NO, YOU WERE BACKING AWAY.
IS MY BODY THAT GROSS?
AM I FLAB-BY?
THAT'S NOT WHAT I....
HEY! DON'T FACE THIS WAY!
AHHH

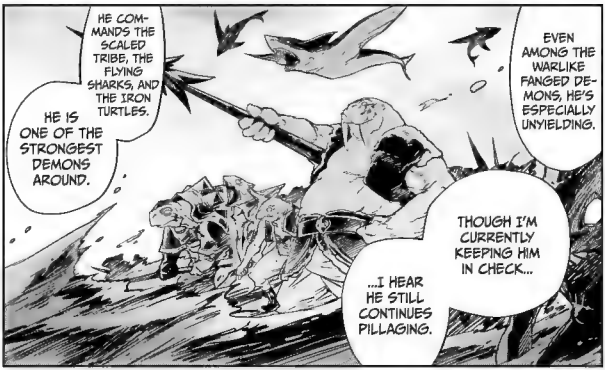

KLICK!
EXCUSE ME.
I BROUGHT TEA.
ANY-WAY...
...THIS FOOD SHOULD EFFEC-TIVELY PREVENT FAMINE IN COLDER REGIONS!
I SEE! THAT'S AMAZ-ING!


ANY-WAY...
...AS LONG AS YOU'RE CAREFUL WITH ITS TOXICITY, IT SHOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM.
THE REPLANT DISEASE WILL LIKELY BE A LARGER PROBLEM.
LEAVING THE NUTRIENTS IN THE EARTH TO REPLENISH THEMSELVES WILL LIMIT HOW MUCH WE'RE ABLE TO PRODUCE ON A REGULAR BASIS.


WHAT I'M HOPING FOR ARE FISH FROM THE ANTARCTIC OCEAN.
ARE THOSE OFFER-INGS?
SPECIFICALLY, OFFERINGS OF BURNED PLANTS, THE REMAINS OF ANIMALS, AND THE EXCREMENT OF LIVESTOCK.
YOU'RE RIGHT. MAKING OFFERINGS ARE A FORM OF PRAYER.
ARE YOU GOING TO PRAY TO THE SPIR-ITS OF THE EARTH?


BUT THAT HAS A LOT OF PROB-LEMS TOO.
WHAT?
IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE ANTARCTIC OCEAN?
THEY CAN EVEN BE USED TO FEED CHICKENS.
WE'LL NEED A STEADY SUPPLY OF THEM.
THAT'S RIGHT. FISH MAKE GOOD OFFER-INGS.
FISH?
EXTRACT OIL
FOOD
EX-TRACTED REMAINS
UNSOLD GOODS
FOOD REMAINS
ORGANIC FERTILIZER (FISH MEAL)
DRIED AND POWDERED.

ONE PROBLEM IS, AS I'M SURE YOU'RE AWARE...
...THE ANTARCTIC GENERAL.
THAT OLD MAN, HUH?
ANTARCTIC GENERAL


HE COMMANDS THE SCALED TRIBE, THE FLYING SHARKS, AND THE IRON TURTLES.
HE IS ONE OF THE STRONGEST DEMONS AROUND.
EVEN AMONG THE WARLIKE FANGED DEMONS, HE'S ESPECIALLY UNYIELDING.
THOUGH I'M CURRENTLY KEEPING HIM IN CHECK...
...I HEAR HE STILL CONTINUES PILLAGING.

I'VE FOUNGHT HIM A FEW TIMES.
HIS BODY WAS HUGE...
...AND HE HANDLED A HARPOON WELL.
OFFICIALLY, I'M CURRERNTLY RECOVERING, SO IT'S DIF-FICULT FOR ME TO ISSUE ORDERS.
THOUGH I DOUBT HE WOULD LISTEN TO ME EVEN IF I DID.
AMIDST THE CONFUSION OF THE SECOND HOLY KEY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE, DEMONS CAPTURED AURORA ISLAND IN THE ANTARCTIC SEA. NOW THE ANTARCTIC GENERAL'S ARMIES ARE GARRISONED THERE.
IF WE PLAN TO OPERATE IN THE ANTARCTIC SEA, OUR INTERESTS ARE SURE TO CLASH.
THE OTHER PROB-LEM...
...IS THE "ALLI-ANCE."

I'VE HEARD OF IT. IT'S A GATHERING OF MERCHANTS, RIGHT?
WHY WOULD MERCHANTS BE A PROBLEM?
THEY HAVE POWER IN THE NAME OF PUBLIC INTEREST. PROTECTING THEIR SHARED RIGHT TO ENGAGE IN BUSINESS, THEY ARE INVOLVED IN BUSINESS THROUGHOUT THE CONTINENT.
SINCE WE EXPECT TO CONDUCT MAJOR DISTRIBUTION AND BUSINESS, WE CANNOT AVOID THEM.
THEY'RE JUST A GROUP OF MERCHANTS. YOU'RE BLOWING THIS OUT OF PROPORTION.
THEIR COMBINED ASSETS ARE ASTRONOMICAL. AT THE VERY LEAST, EVEN IF THEY BOUGHT THE SOUTHERN KINGDOMS OUTRIGHT FIVE TIMES, THEY WOULD STILL HAVE MONEY LEFT OVER.
THE SCALE OF THEIR ORGANIZATION IS THE PROBLEM.
THEIR INFLUENCE REACHES THROUGHOUT ALL OF THE CENTRAL CONTINENT.
IF WE'RE NOT CAREFUL, WE COULD START A WAR.

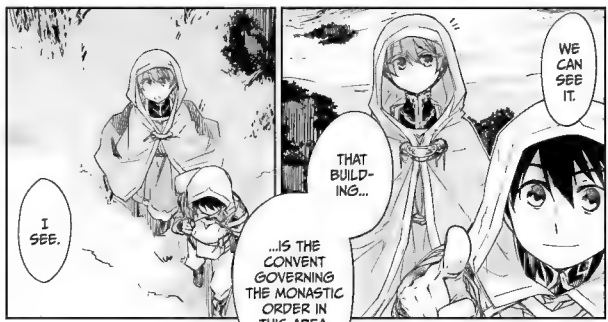
WHAT ARE THEY...
...MONSTERS?
THEY ARE UNDOUBTEDLY MONSTERS.
HUMAN LIVES ARE CONDUCTED ON THE BACKS OF MONSTERS.
THOUGH WE CANNOT AVOID CONTACT...
...WITH THEM...
...IF WE'RE CAREFUL...
BREATHE

WE'RE GOOD.
GOOD.
YOUR DISPLACEMENT MAGIC IS QUITE CONVENIENT.

LAKE NATION CAPITAL OUTSKIRTS
WHOOSH

COMPARED TO MY LADY'S CLOTHES, THIS DISGUISE...
...IS FAR MORE COMFORTABLE.
THOSE AREN'T BAD, THOUGH.
TMP.
TMP.

VERY WELL.
OUR DESTINATION IS JUST UP AHEAD.
JUST TO BE SAFE, YOU SHOULD HIDE YOUR FACE.


I SEE.
...IS THE CONVENT GOVERNING THE MONASTIC ORDER IN THIS AREA.
THAT BUILDING...
WE CAN SEE IT.

OUR CONVENT IS PREPARING FOR THE AFTERNOON PRAYER.
PLEASE WAIT IN HERE.
THANK YOU FOR SHOWING US THE WAY.
WE SUCCESSFULLY MADE IT INSIDE.
YES. THIS PLACE HAS A UNIQUE ATMOSPHERE.
WOW.
IT'S DIFFICULT FOR ME TO UNDERSTAND RELIGION.
IT'S NOT EASY FOR ME TO EXPLAIN EITHER.
NOTHING BEATS BEING CAREFUL, THOUGH.
AFTER ALL, YOU'RE THE DEMON QUEEN.
I DO NOT FEAR GOD!
HA HA HA
NOT GOD, BUT SPIRITS.
HUMANS ARE TERRIFYING WHEN THEY SHOUT THE NAMES OF SPIRITS.
I'LL REMEMBER THAT.
SHIVER
THE PEOPLE OF THIS WORLD BELIEVE IN LIGHT AND SPIRITS.

YEAH.
ALL THE MAJOR KINGDOMS OF THE CENTRAL CONTINENT WORSHIP THE SPIRITS OF LIGHT.
HOWEVER, BECAUSE THE CHURCH IS A LARGE ORGANIZATION, THERE ARE LOTS OF FACTIONS WITHIN IT.
THOSE FACTIONS ARE NOW OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED AS MONASTIC ORDERS.
THIS "LAKESIDE CONVENT" IS ONE SUCH ORDER.

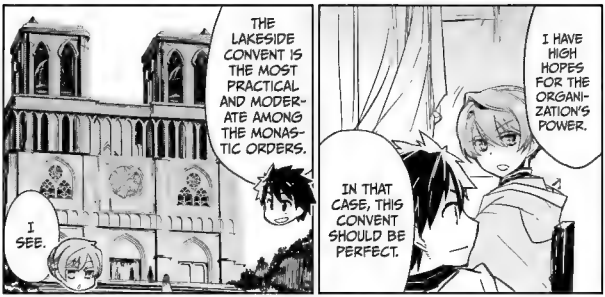
WHAT ABOUT YOU, HERO?
ME?
I GUESS I BELIEVE.

STANDING ON THE BATTLE-FIELD, ESPECIALLY WHEN I'M FACING DEMONS...
...I CAN FEEL THE SPIRITS AROUND ME.
RATHER THAN FAITH, IT FEELS LIKE FRIENDSHIP.

WELL, I AM A HERO.
SOME-TIMES I RECEIVE MESSAG-ES IN MY DREAMS.
THEY'RE JUST INCREDIBLY GOOD AND PROBABLY A LOT LIKE YOU.
I THINK THEY'RE WEAK-WILLED SPIRITS WHO CAN'T TURN DOWN TROU-BLESOME JOBS.

GOD DOES EXIST?
THEY'RE NOT GODS. THEY'RE LIGHT SPIRITS.
CHURCHES HOLD GREAT MEANING IN SOCIETY...
...EVEN OUTSIDE OF FAITH.
JUST IN TERMS OF NUMBERS, THE "ALLIANCE" CAN'T EVEN COMPARE TO HOW HUGE THE ORGANIZATION IS.

THEY'RE EVEN IMPORTANT FOR RESEARCH AND ACADEMICS...
...HUH?
YEAH.
I GUESS YOU COULD SAY THE CHURCH CONTROLS MOST OF...
...THAT KIND OF KNOWLEDGE.
CITY PEOPLE LEARN STORIES AND HOW TO READ AND WRITE DURING CHURCH MASS.
THAT'S WHAT YOU CALL EDUCATION.
LEARNED A WORD!


I HAVE HIGH HOPES FOR THE ORGANIZATION'S POWER.
IN THAT CASE, THIS CONVENT SHOULD BE PERFECT.
THE LAKESIDE CONVENT IS THE MOST PRACTICAL AND MODERATE AMONG THE MONASTIC ORDERS.
I SEE.

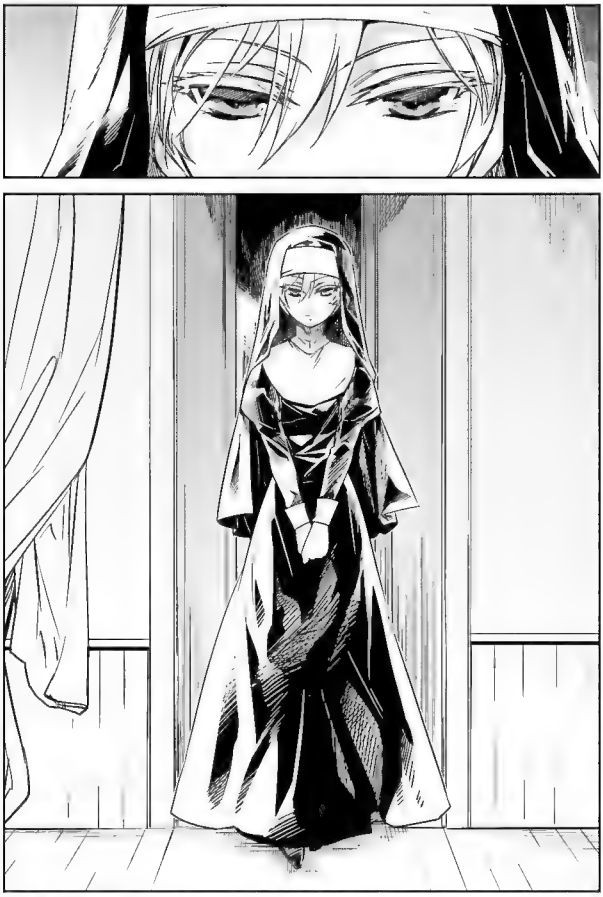
ISN'T PROVIDING HOSPITALS THE CHURCH'S JOB?
EVEN HOSPITALS?
SOME PLACES DON'T HAVE THEM, THOUGH.
THEY PRIMARILY WORK TO SUPPORT FARMERS.
THEY EVEN OPERATE HOSPITALS.
THEY PROVIDE LABOR, LEAD GRAPE CULTIVATION, AND COMPLETE FAMILY REGISTERS.
YOU KNOW A LOT ABOUT THIS, HERO.
I'M JUST REPEATING SOMETHING AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE TOLD ME.

DEMON QUEEN.
SOME-TIMES, YOU SORT OF..
WELL ...
SOMETIMES YOU LOOK VERY SAD...
...LIKE JUST NOW.

REALLY?
I DON'T REALIZE I'M DOING IT.

HEY, DEMON QUEEN.
HOW DO YOU SEE ALL OF THIS?

HERO?
KLIK



THE END CHAPTER 3
Having Lots of Food Makes Me Very Happy

The DEMON PLANT RESISTANT to STARVATION

The demon plant known as the "potato" that appears as their trump card against starvation is an exceptional product that has saved many people in reality.

Economist Adam Smith actually claimed the potato yielded three times as much product as wheat.

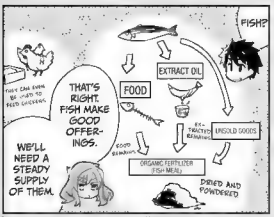
The Potato Has Saved Countless People in Reality

The potato, also known as the horse bell tuber, was given that name because it resembles the bells attached to horses. The potato's country of origin is Peru in South America. When Europe entered the Age of Exploration in the 16th Century and the famous explorer Columbus discovered a new continent, many Western Europeans crossed the ocean to the American continent, and the potatoes they brought home with them spread throughout the world. The potato reached Japan at the beginning of the 17th Century through the Netherlands, Japan's only European trading partner under the Tokugawa shogunate.

Potatoes store the nutrients they draw from the grown in what is known as a "tuberous root," and the part we consume is that tuberous root. Potatoes begin to sprout once they exceed a certain temperature, so when they are cultivated for food, potatoes that have begun sprouting are cut into pieces and planted as seed potatoes. Because potatoes grow using the nutrients in the seed potato, not only can they be cultivated in infertile lands, but also as a plant indigenous to a cool region, they can even be harvested in years when the weather causes other crops to fail. Due to these qualities, Northern European regions in particular were encouraged to cultivate potatoes, and the potato saved many lives during times of famine. Even during Japan's "Great Tenpo Famine," records indicate both the sweet potato and white potato saved countless lives.

Because the potato can be kept in storage for long periods of time, it has been used as an emergency food source. However, if potatoes are exposed to light while they are being stored, they turn green, and if the temperature is too high, they begin to sprout. The areas around the green skin and sprouts contain high quantities of a poison known as potato glycoalkaloids (PGA). Consuming them causes food poisoning, with symptoms including stomach pain, diarrhea, and gastrointestinal damage, so caution must be exercised when handling potatoes.

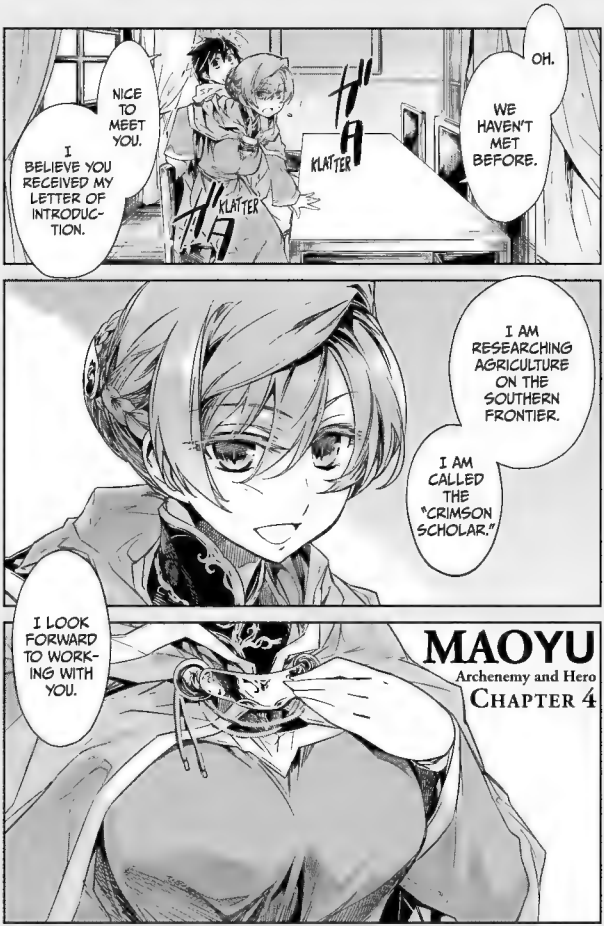
Additionally, as the Demon Queen explained to the Hero, potatoes are prone to specific replant disease, and potatoes must be fertilized in order to replant them continuously.



She expressed the idea as "offerings" because they do not yet have a concept of fertilizing cultivated land.

The Demon Queen suggests using fishmeal as fertilizer. This provides several advantages. The nitrogen content in fishmeal dissolves easily in soil and is quickly absorbed by produce. Because the amino acids found in marine products can be absorbed by plants without performing photosynthesis, fishmeal allows plants to grow well even when bad weather persists.

LEGENDARY TECHNIQUE


OH.
WE HAVEN'T MET BEFORE.
NICE TO MEET YOU.
I BELIEVE YOU RECEIVED MY LETTER OF INTRODUCTION.
KLATTER
KLATTER
I AM RESEARCHING AGRICULTURE ON THE SOUTHERN FRONTIER.
I AM CALLED THE "CRIMSON SCHOLAR."
I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU.
MAOYU
Archenemy and Hero
CHAPTER 4

I'M HER ASSISTANT AND ESCORT...
UMM..
...THE "WHITE SWORDSMAN."
I AM AN ABSENT-MINDED MAN DAUNTED BY THE IDEA OF ENTERING A CONVENT.
UH...
BUT I HOPE YOU WILL FORGIVE...
...ME.
OH.

CHAPTER 4 Archenemy and Hero

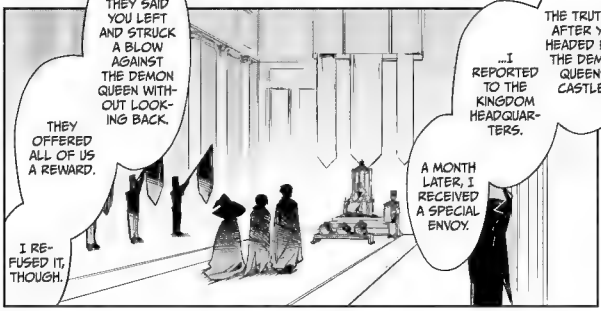
Where Have You Been Wandering Around Until Now?

WHOA
GRAB
YOU...
...DUMB...
...HERO
!!
SORRY
YEAH, I KNOW
SKWEEZE
SKWEEZE
SKWEEZE
?
IT'S BEEN A YEAR!
I HAVEN'T HEARD FROM YOU IN A YEAR!
DO YOU KNOW HER?
YEAH.
THAT'S RIGHT.
UMM...
YOU KNOW...
I'VE GOT A LOT GOING ON.
"WHITE SWORDSMAN"? YEAH, RIGHT!
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN WANDERING AROUND UNTIL NOW?

WE USED TO BE TRAVELING COMPANIONS.
SHE AND I.
AND...
...WE WENT ON ALL KINDS OF ADVENTURES WITH AN OLD ARCHER AND A MAGICIAN.
YOUR PARTY HAD AN EXCESS OF POWER.
SHE AND I WOULD TAKE TURNS HEALING.
TRAVELING COMPANIONS? HOW SHAMELESS.
YOU LEFT US AND STRUCK OUT ON YOUR OWN.
THINK OF HOW WE FELT BEING ABANDONED IN THAT FRONTIER TOWN.
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MUCH WE WORRIED ABOUT YOU?
HOW ANGRY WE WERE?

SO...
...WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO?
UH
OH.
UMM.
THE OLD MAN AND I WERE FINE...
I'M SORRY.
...BUT THE MAGICIAN WAS REALLY DEPRESSED!
I'M SORRY, RED SCHOLAR.
OH!
!
I DIDN'T EVEN INTRODUCE MYSELF. HOW RUDE OF ME.
OH...
OKAY.
I AM THE "FEMALE KNIGHT," FORMER KNIGHT OF THE HOLY SILVER ORDER.
THROUGH MY CONNECTIONS, I NOW WORK HERE AT THE LAKESIDE CONVENT...
...TO BETTER THE LIVES OF THE MASSES.
FEMALE KNIGHT

SO...
...ANY-WAY...
...I WAS ABLE TO WOUND THE DEMON QUEEN...
THEY WERE LIKE "GRAAARGH."
...BUT THE DEMON ARMIES LAUNCHED AN ALL OUT ATTACK, SO I RETREATED.
I SEE.
SINCE THEN, FOR A BUNCH OF REASONS...
...I COULDN'T APPEAR OUT IN THE OPEN.
I'D BETTER CHANGE THE SUBJECT BEFORE I SPILL THE BEANS
ANYWAY, WHY ARE YOU RUNNING A CONVENT OUT HERE?
I'M ORIGINALLY FROM THIS AREA.
I TOLD YOU BEFORE.
I WAS KNIGHTED AT THE CHURCH, AND I AM A KNIGHT OF THE ORDER.


THEY SAID YOU LEFT AND STRUCK A BLOW AGAINST THE DEMON QUEEN WITHOUT LOOKING BACK.
THEY OFFERED ALL OF US A REWARD.
I REFUSED IT, THOUGH.
THE TRUTH IS, AFTER YOU HEADED FOR THE DEMON QUEEN'S CASTLE...
...I REPORTED TO THE KINGDOM HEADQUARTERS.
A MONTH LATER, I RECEIVED A SPECIAL ENVOY.

SO I RETURNED TO MY HOMETOWN TO WORK TO HELP EVERYONE THIS TIME.
THEY SAID THEY WOULD APPOINT US TO IMPORTANT OFFICES IN THE KINGDOM...
...BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO USE YOU AS AN EXCUSE TO GET AHEAD.

SO...
...WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OTHER TWO?
I SEE.
MANLINESS...
SERIOUSLY.
THAT'S A GREAT ASPIRATION.
I ALWAYS THOUGHT OF YOU AS A PARTY MEMBER OVERFLOWING WITH MANLINESS WHO ALWAYS CAME THROUGH WHEN IT COUNTED.

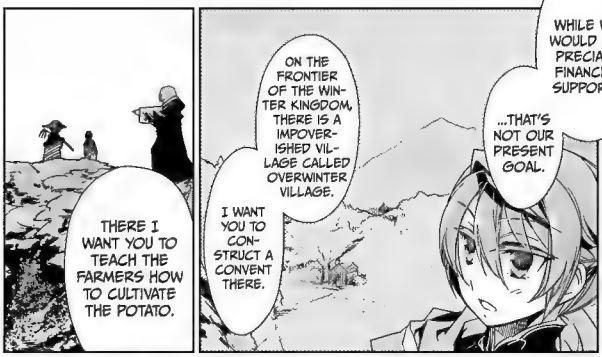
WHY ARE YOU APOLOGIZING?
IF MY EFFORTS EARNED YOU A REWARD, THAT'S A GREAT THING.
HE'S BEEN SUCCESSFUL.
UMM...
I'M SORRY.
THE ARCHER WAS ORIGINALLY A SOLDIER, SO HE RETURNED TO THE ROYAL ARMY.
HE SAID HE WAS JOINING THE INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT OF SOME SOUTHERN KINGDOM.
HE TOOK THE REWARD TOO?
SHE WAS AN INTERESTING PERSON.
THE MAGICIAN WENT ALONE...
SO...
...WHAT ABOUT THE MAGICIAN? I BET SHE TOOK THE REWARD.
DESPITE HER APPEARANCE, SHE WAS PRETTY MISERLY.
I BOUGHT THESE BOOKS
...AFTER YOU, TO THE SPIRIT WORLD.

I'M SORRY!
RUSTLE
YOU TRIED TO STOP HER, RIGHT?
OF COURSE!
BUT THE NEXT MORNING, HER THINGS WERE GONE. SHE PROBABLY...
YOU COULDN'T HELP IT THEN.
I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL, BUT YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEEL BAD ABOUT.
IT'S MY FAULT FOR CHARGING IN ALONE IN THE FIRST PLACE.
HERO.

DE-MON ...
NO, I SCHOL-I AR. I MEAN ...
THE THING YOU MEN-TIONED IN YOUR LETTER OF IN-TRODUC-TION.
ANY-WAY... ...WE CAME TODAY TO NEGOTIATE AND DISCUSS SOMETHING WITH YOU.
NICE TO MEET YOU.
I AM THE HERO'S FORMER TRAVELING COMPANION, THE FEMALE KNIGHT.
ALLOW ME TO REIN-TRODUCE MYSELF.
I WOULD LIKE YOU TO CALL ME THE CRIMSON SCHOLAR.
FIRST...
...LOOK AT THIS.
LET'S HEAR IT.
WE CAME HERE TODAY BECAUSE WE NEED THE CONVENT'S HELP.

WUMPH
ROLL
ROLL
WHAT ARE THESE?
POTATOES.
THEY ARE A PLANT.
I HAVE THE DETAILS WRITTEN HERE.
THE MAIN POINT IS IT'S A CROP THAT CAN BE CULTIVATED IN COLD REGIONS...
!
...AND YIELDS TRIPLE THE AMOUNT OF PRODUCE AS WHEAT IN THE SAME AMOUNT OF SPACE.
NATURALLY, THERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO BE CAREFUL OF..
...BUT THE CROP HAS MANY ADVANTAGES.
IT'S NOT DIFFICULT TO HARVEST EITHER

I'M SURE YOU UNDER-STAND...
BUT THIS CROP COULD SAVE MANY PEOPLE FROM STARVA-TION.
THAT'S COR-RECT.
GULP
WHAT KIND OF ASSIS-TANCE DO YOU WANT FROM THE CONVENT?
IS IT MON-EY?
IF THAT'S THE CASE, USING ANY MEANS POSSIBLE ...
...WE WILL PROVIDE AS MUCH FINANCIAL SUPPORT AS WE CAN.
SEE, HERO?
THIS IS HOW PEOPLE WITH KNOWLEDGE OF CROPS RESPOND.
SORRY I WAS SO SLOW TO RESPOND.


WHILE WE WOULD APPRECIATE FINANCIAL SUPPORT...
...THAT'S NOT OUR PRESENT GOAL.
ON THE FRONTIER OF THE WINTER KINGDOM, THERE IS A IMPOVERISHED VILLAGE CALLED OVERWINTER VILLAGE.
I WANT YOU TO CONSTRUCT A CONVENT THERE.
THERE I WANT YOU TO TEACH THE FARMERS HOW TO CULTIVATE THE POTATO.

THAT'S ALL YOU WANT?
YES.
SHOULD THE CULTIVATION OF POTATOES SUCCEED...
...COULD YOU CONSTRUCT ADDITIONAL CONVENTS IN NEARBY VILLAGES AND KINGDOMS AND SPREAD THE CULTIVATION TECHNIQUES?

THAT WOULD BE IN LINE WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF OUR MONASTIC ORDER.
HOW DO YOU BENEFIT FROM THIS, SCHOLAR?
IT WOULD ALSO INCREASE THE INFLUENCE OF OUR ORDER. WE ONLY STAND TO BENEFIT FROM THIS.
MY GOAL IS ALSO THE SPREAD OF POTATO CULTIVATION TECHNIQUES.

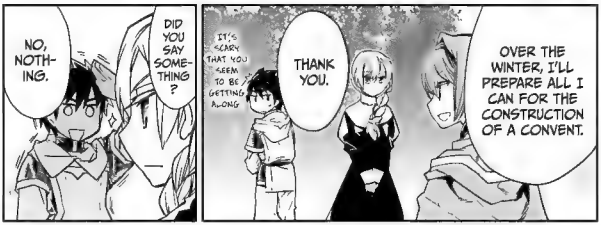
WHILE THIS TECHNIQUE IS CURRENTLY BEING TESTED IN OVERWINTER VILLAGE...
...EVEN IN THE EVENT OF SUCCESS, WE LACK THE ORGANIZATION AND MANPOWER TO SPREAD THE KNOWLEDGE.
IN ADDITION TO POTATOES, I'M ALSO RESEARCHING AGRICULTURAL REFORM TECHNIQUES.
I HAVE A TECHNIQUE TO ENHANCE THE PRODUCTIVITY OF CURRENT AGRICULTURAL METHODS.
YOU DO?
SHE'S PRETTY SMART.
WHEAT
BARLEY
CLOVER
I AM HOPING YOU CAN HELP US WITH THAT.
SURELY YOU MUST BE A MESSENGER...
...FROM THE SPIRITS OF LIGHT!
GRAB
GRIND
OW!
I WOULDN'T BE SO SURE.
SHE'S ACTUALLY...

WHAT?
WE APPRECIATE YOUR KINDNESS.
I SHALL HEAD TO OVERWINTER VILLAGE MYSELF...
...TO SUPPORT YOU WITH ALL THE MONASTIC ORDER'S STRENGTH!
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WISH, I SHALL DO EVERYTHING I CAN.
YES.
BAM
I'M A NIHILISTIC HERO FULL OF DANGER.
BEING AROUND ME CAN BE TROUBLESOME...
...YOU KNOW?
NO, IT'S JUST ...
UH...
IS THERE A PROBLEM... HERO?
I ALREADY EXPERIENCED THAT LONG AGO.
SIGH
OR IS THERE SOME REASON YOU DON'T WANT ME TO GO TO OVERWINTER VILLAGE?
PEEK!

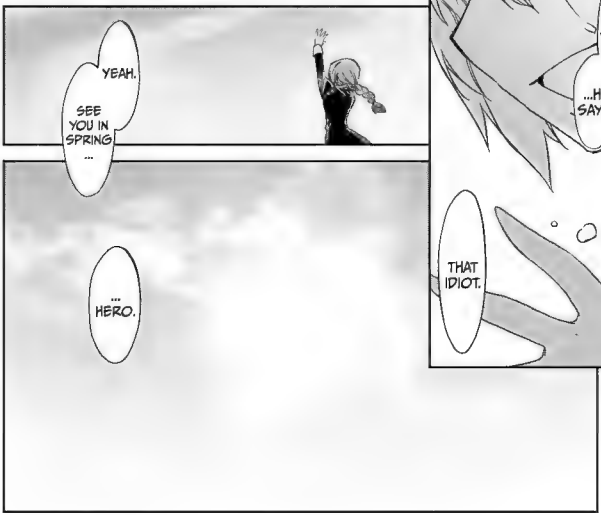
YOU MUSTN'T BE RUDE TO THE PRIORESS OF THE ORDER THAT'S HELPING US...
...HERO.
WHAT?
YOU SEEM TO HAVE A LOT OF LEEWAY.
ROARR
I HAVE NO SUCH THING. I CAME TO THIS MONASTIC ORDER FOR HELP BECAUSE OF OUR FINANCIAL SITUATION.
BECAUSE I BELIEVE FIRMLY IN THE SUPREMACY OF CONTRACTS, I SIMPLY SHOW THOSE I WISH TO FORM CONTRACTS WITH THE UTMOST RESPECT.
YAAAH
TREMBLE
TREMBLE

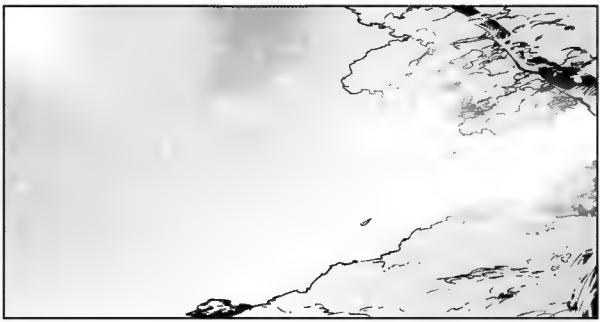
I NEVER THOUGHT WE'D MEET AGAIN, THOUGH.
BOTH THE HERO I HAVEN'T SEEN IN A YEAR...
...AND THE SCHOLAR WHO BROUGHT THIS BOON OF A FOOD...
...MUST HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO ME BY THE SPIRITS OF LIGHT.
NO.
THIS IS PURELY THE WORK OF HUMANS.
THE EFFORTS OF THOSE WITH SOULS.
YES.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
THAT'S EXACTLY RIGHT.

NUN.
I WILL APPOINT A NEW PRIORESS AT THIS CONVENT AND HEAD THERE AT THE FIRST SIGN OF SPRING.
WELL, THEN.
I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN OVER-WINTER VILLAGE.


NO, NOTHING.
DID YOU SAY SOMETHING?
IT'S SCARY THAT YOU SEEM TO BE GETTING ALONG
THANK YOU.
OVER THE WINTER, I'LL PREPARE ALL I CAN FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CONVENT.

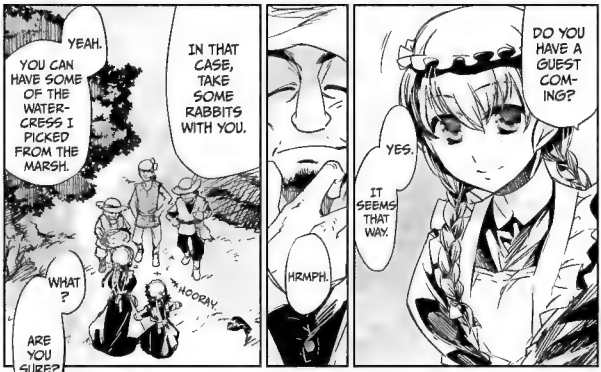
LATER.
YES.
WE WILL MEET AGAIN IN SPRING.
WHOOSH!
SEE YOU IN SPRING!


YEAH.
SEE YOU IN SPRING ...
... HERO.
"LATER" ...
...HE SAYS.
THAT IDIOT.



THE WEATHER'S NICE TODAY.
HEY.
WHAT'S UP, HUNTER?
HEY!
HEY!
YEAH, I WAS SURPRISED.
WE'VE STILL GOT LOTS OF SALTED BOAR LEFT THIS YEAR.
THAT'S AMAZING.
IT'S ALREADY SPRING.
I GOT FOUR RABBITS.
THIS IS GOING TO BE A GOOD YEAR.
SPEAK OF THE DEVIL. THOSE ARE THE SISTERS FROM THE MANSIONS AT THE EDGE OF TOWN.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
HEY!
SINCE HE TOOK OUT ALL THE BEARS, THE FOREST'S BEEN SO NICE.
IT'S ALL THANKS TO THE SWORDSMAN LIVING AT THE EDGE OF THE VILLAGE.

HELLO, EVERY-ONE.
HELLO.
ARE YOU GOING SOME-WHERE?
YEAH.
WE'RE GOING TO GET PICKLED RASPBERRIES FROM THE VILLAGE CHIEFS.
THAT'S A GOOD GIRL.


DO YOU HAVE A GUEST COM-ING?
YES.
IT SEEMS THAT WAY.
HRMPH.
IN THAT CASE, TAKE SOME RABBITS WITH YOU.
YEAH.
YOU CAN HAVE SOME OF THE WATER-CRESS I PICKED FROM THE MARSH.
HOORAY.
WHAT?
ARE YOU SURE?

IT'S NO PROBLEM.
WE OWE YOU FOR MAKING THE FOREST A SAFE PLACE.
THE SWORDSMAN SHARED HIS BOAR MEAT WITH US OVER THE WINTER.
THANKS.
THANK YOU.
EVERYONE'S SMILING NOW.
IT'S NO WONDER YOU WORK AT THE MANSION. YOU'RE BOTH SO BEAUTIFUL.
YOU'RE SMART, KIND, AND PRETTY.
YOU'RE NOTHING LIKE US.
THANK YOU.
GRIN"!
....
I'M SORRY.

THAT SHOULD DO IT.
ALL RIGHT.
SLAP

COME ON
SKWEEE
OOOF
SKWEEE
PLSHZ

WERE YOU PLANNING ON LEAVING WITHOUT TELLING ME?
YOU BELONG TO ME.

YOU'RE ARMED TO THE TEETH IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.
WAAH

DEMON QUEEN.
I'M SORRY.
I CAN'T JUST ABANDON THE MAGICIAN.

I BELONG TO YOU...
...AND YOU BELONG TO ME.
WHY DO YOU LOOK SO PATHETIC?
YOU'RE THE HERO.
WHAT?
DID YOU THINK I WOULD TRY TO STOP YOU?
....
KLIK...
DON'T UNDERESTIMATE ME.
THIS WAY.
....
THIS IS...

I BELIEVE IT WAS TWO GENERATIONS AGO. THE DEMON KING USED THAT BLACK SUIT OF ARMOR.
DON'T WORRY. IT'S NOT CURSED.

THIS IS A LIST OF TRIBE LEADERS YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO TRUST AND LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION.
IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE, YOU'LL NEED HELP.

WITHOUT ME AROUND, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SPIRIT WORLD HAS GROWN LAX.
DO WHATEVER YOU CAN TO ENFORCE DISCIPLINE.
OH...
OKAY.
YOU'LL LOOK THE PART IF YOU'RE WEARING THIS.

THANK YOU.
SHEESH.
YOU SHOULD BE GRATEFUL TO HAVE A GENEROUS MASTER LIKE ME.
WELL ... YOU KNOW ...
HUMANS HAVE CUSTOMS, DON'T THEY?
HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THAT'S IT?

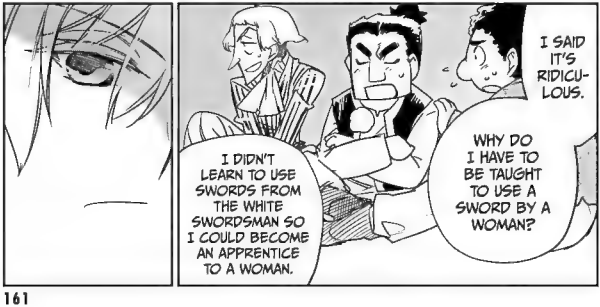
CUSTOMS?
YES. YOU KNOW...
WHEN CLOSE FRIENDS... WHEN A MAN AND WOMAN WHO ARE CLOSE SAY GOODBYE...
...THEY PERFORM A SPECIAL CUSTOM.
OH.
YEAH.
DO YOU NOT WANT TO BE-CAUSE I'M FLABBY?
WHY WOULD YOU SAY THAT?

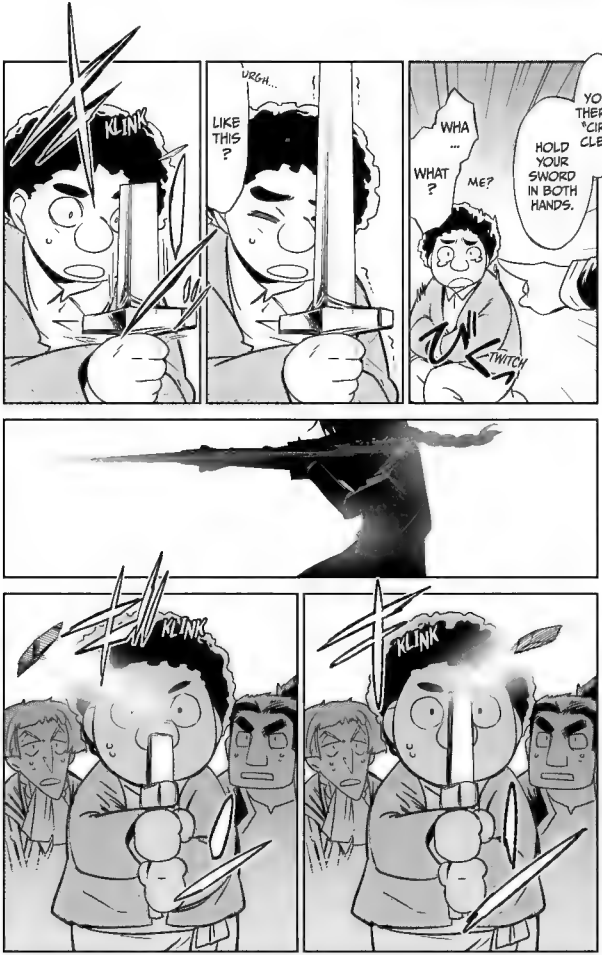
YANNK
AH.
KLANG
ANYWAY, BYE!
KLANG
OH!
I'LL FINISH IT WHEN I COME BACK!
THAT WAS MY FORE-HEAD!

WHOOSH
PROMISE ME, HERO! YOU MUST RETURN!

PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
WELL, THEN.
NOW THAT WE'VE WARMED UP...
...WE WILL NOW TRAIN WITH WEAP-ONS.

WHAT?
THIS ...
THIS IS RIDICU-LOUS.


I DIDN'T LEARN TO USE SWORDS FROM THE WHITE SWORDSMAN SO I COULD BECOME AN APPRENTICE TO A WOMAN.
I SAID IT'S RIDICU-LOUS.
WHY DO I HAVE TO BE TAUGHT TO USE A SWORD BY A WOMAN?


KLINK
URGH...
LIKE THIS?
HEY. YOU THERE, "CIRCLE." HOLD YOUR SWORD IN BOTH HANDS.
WHA...
WHAT?
ME?
TWITCH
KLINK
KLINK

I'LL TELL YOU THIS, "WARRIOR."
TWITCH
I AM THE FEMALE KNIGHT OF THE LAKE KINGDOM.
I FOUGHT THROUGH A THOUSAND BATTLES IN THE SPIRIT WORLD ALONGSIDE THE HERO.

WITH...
WITH THE...
...HERO?

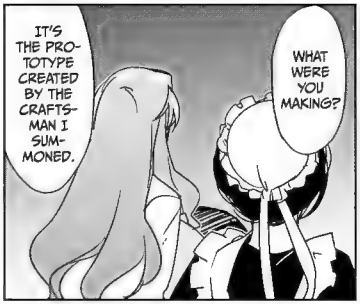
ARE...
ARE...
ARE YOU...
...THE DEVIL'S MASK KNIGHT"?
"THE MIGHTY PRINCESS"?
"THE STONE CRUSHING LADY DEMON"?
YOU KNOW ALL ABOUT ME...
..."WARRIOR."
TREMBLE
HA
TREMBLE
HA
TREMBLE
HA
TREMBLE

THE HERO...
UH...
THE WHITE SWORDSMAN IS TOO PREDISPOSED TO BEING A SWORDSMAN.
GO LIKE "WHACK"
...AND "VAAARGH."
BECAUSE HE MANAGES EVERYTHING "ONE WAY OR ANOTHER," HE'S NOT A VERY GOOD TEACHER.
THIS ISN'T GREAT STRENGTH.
IT'S TECHNIQUE.
AS LONG AS YOU LEARN HOW IT'S DONE, EVEN YOU CAN DO IT.
UGH
UMM.
SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
YES, SORT OF.
WAS THE WHITE SWORDSMAN YOUR APPRENTICE?
THAT'S IT!
THAT'S HOW IT IS?
THE WHITE SWORDSMAN IS ON A SEARCH MISSION ON IMPERIAL ORDERS...
...WHICH MEANS I'LL BE HANDLING YOUR COMBAT TRAINING FOUR TIMES A WEEK FOR A WHILE.
UNLIKE THE WHITE SWORDSMAN, I INTEND TO USE THEORETICAL AND PRAGMATIC TEACHING METHODS BASED ON FUNDAMENTALS.
WE WILL RAISE YOUR MASTERY OF MARTIAL ARTS TO A LEVEL OF PRACTICAL USE.

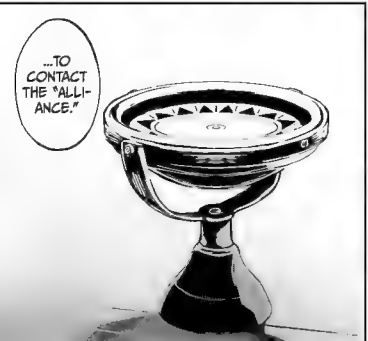
I AM HONORED TO HAVE A COMPANION OF THE HERO TEACH US SWORDSMANSHIP!
IF YOU INSIST, I SUPPOSE IT CAN'T BE HELPED.
I WILL ALSO STUDY THE WAY OF THE SWORD.
NFWIPP
FIRST RUN THROUGH THE FOREST THREE TIMES!
AFTER THAT, RUN ANOTHER LAP WHILE SWINGING WOODEN SWORDS!
AFTER THAT, PRACTICE SWINGING A LONGSWORD 500 TIMES!
CRAK
YAAAH
THE WEATHER IS NICE AGAIN TODAY.
I AGREE.
AAAH

WHY DID I COME HERE?
RE-ALLY?
ONCE THE HERO LEFT, SHE WAS FURIOUS LIKE A BADGER WITH AN ARROW STUCK IN ITS BEHIND.
GRIND
GRIND
BUT...
...THE FEMALE KNIGHT SEEMS TO BE ENJOYING HERSELF.
SHE MUST ENJOY HAVING OTHERS DEPEND ON HER.
IT'S CUTE.
NO, NO.
YOUR BODY IS QUITE NICE AS WELL, DEMON QUEEN.
HMPH.
AND HER BODY IS TIGHTER THAN YOURS, DEMON QUEEN.

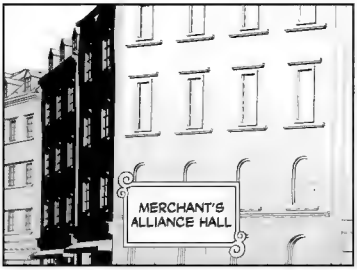
PHYSICALLY YOU CAN BE EITHER SEXY OR SOOTHING...
...BUT YOUR PERSONALITY IS YOUR GREATEST WEAKNESS. IT'S NOT EVEN SLIGHTLY SEXY OR SOOTHING.
SIGH
はぁ…
GRIND
キリ
キリ
LEAVE ME ALONE.


WHAT WERE YOU MAKING?
IT'S THE PROTOTYPE CREATED BY THE CRAFTSMAN I SUMMONED.

IT'S DONE.
KLANK!

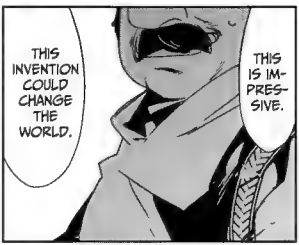

...TO CONTACT THE "ALLIANCE."

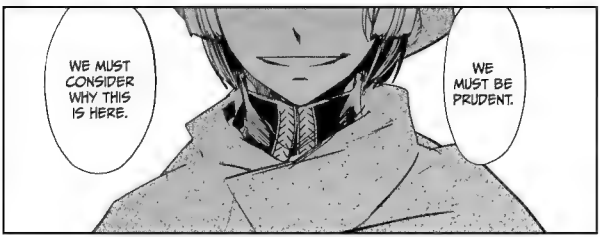
I'LL USE THIS...


MERCHANT'S ALLIANCE HALL

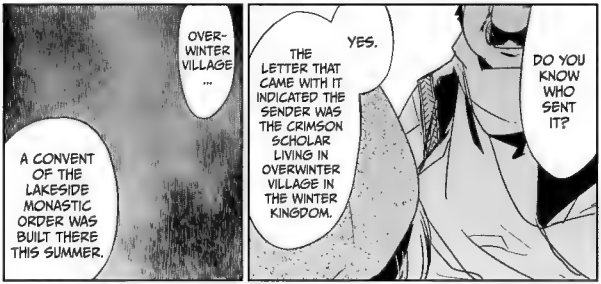
ROLLING SEAS KINGDOM GULF COAST CITY

...COULD PAVE THE WAY TOWARD ACCOMPLISHING YOUR DREAM... NO, OUR DREAM OF BECOMING LEADERS.
THIS OBJECT ...


THIS INVENTION COULD CHANGE THE WORLD.
THIS IS IMPRESSIVE.


WE MUST CONSIDER WHY THIS IS HERE.
WE MUST BE PRUDENT.

FIRST, I AM NOT THE ONE WHO INVENTED THIS.
SOMEONE DELIVERED THIS TO ME.
WE MUST CONSIDER THAT PERSON'S INTENTIONS.


DO YOU KNOW WHO SENT IT?
YES.
THE LETTER THAT CAME WITH IT INDICATED THE SENDER WAS THE CRIMSON SCHOLAR LIVING IN OVERWINTER VILLAGE IN THE WINTER KINGDOM.
OVER-WINTER VILLAGE ...
A CONVENT OF THE LAKESIDE MONASTIC ORDER WAS BUILT THERE THIS SUMMER.

IN ORDER TO MAXIMIZE THE ALLIANCE'S FUTURE GAINS, WE MUST KEEP THIS DEVICE TO OURSELVES.
WE MUST CONTACT THIS SCHOLAR.

THE WINTER KINGDOM DOES NOT FALL WITHIN THE LAKESIDE MONASTIC ORDER'S SPHERE OF INFLUENCE.
IT MUST BE RE-LATED.
IT SEEMS UNNATURAL A CONVENT WAS SUDDENLY CONSTRUCTED AT ITS FRONTIER.

DEPEND-
ING ON
THE
CIRCUM-
STANCES...
I HOPE
THAT
DOESN'T
HAPPEN.
WE
ARE
MER-
CHANTS.
WE
ARE NOT
ASSASSINS.

The ROLE OF CONVENTS and MONASTIC ORDERS

What is the role of "convents," which use their knowledge to support the local population, and "monastic orders," which are composed of convents?

THOSE FACTIONS ARE NOW OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED AS MONASTIC ORDERS.
THIS "LAKESIDE CONVENT" IS ONE SUCH ORDER.
HOWEVER, BECAUSE THE CHURCH IS A LARGE ORGANIZATION, THERE ARE LOTS OF FACTIONS WITHIN IT.
YEAH.
AL... THE MAJOR KINGDOMS OF THE CENTRAL CONTINENT WORSHIP THE SPIRITS OF LIGHT.

The monastic orders of *Maoyu* all believe in the spirits of light.

The Formation of Convents and Monastic Orders

In our world, "convents" are institutions established as a place for Christian monks to live ascetic lives in a communal environment. Their origins date back to the 4th Century.

Monks originated from a group of believers who moved away from earthly life and began living ascetic lives alone in order to further pursue Christian doctrine. These people began practicing their faith in groups, and eventually some began living together in communities. They established convents as a place for themselves to live.

At first, while each convent followed the same faith, they operated independently. However, primarily within the Catholic church, the convents became organized, and as a result, monastic orders were born.

There are a variety of monastic orders. Monastic orders for women promoting the welfare of people and orders devoted to missionary work were born, but as members of the Catholic church's monastic order, they all follow the same dogma. In Japan, the "Society of Jesus" is famous for bringing Christianity to the country, and this is one of such monastic orders.

The Role Fulfilled by Convents

A man known as Benedictus is credited with establishing the system for convents. Because he valued living and studying on one's own efforts, on principle, people's lives at convents are self-sufficient and self-sustaining, and contact with the outside world was limited to acquiring things that could not be acquired otherwise.

Due to this, beginning with agricultural techniques and medicine, convents accumulated knowledge on a wide variety of subjects and ultimately shared the benefits with the people living in the area.

THEY EVEN OPERATE HOSPITALS.
THEY PRIMARILY WORK TO SUPPORT FARMERS.
THEY PROVIDE LABOR, LEAD GRAPE CULTIVATION, AND COMPLETE FAMILY REGISTERS.

Using their accumulated knowledge, convents shared the benefits with the people living in the area.

Convents are well known for spreading their knowledge, including how to distill the wine and herbal liquor vital to their worship and crop rotation. Their medical knowledge was especially advanced, and convents are famous for being the origins of hospitals.

In *Maoyu*, motivated by her desire to help people, the Female Knight who once traveled with the Hero works as a prioress of a convent. The convent helps not only those in need, but it is also the perfect place for those who wish to help others.

MAMARE TOUNO × AKIRA ISHIDA

Cartoonist Akira Ishida and author Mamare Touno turned the world of *Maoyu* into a comic.
How do the two creators describe their passion for their work?
New episodes of *Maoyu* are revealed here.

MAMARE TOUNO
Mamare Touno is a widely supported author who has released numerous works online. In addition to *Maoyu*, he has also published the *Log Horizon* series and is very popular.

AKIRA ISHIDA
Akira Ishida is the artist of this work. He specializes in fantasy and battle series and has previously worked on the comic version of the popular animation *CANAAN* (three volumes).

From Thread to Comic

***Maoyu* is a story Touno-san announced in a 2chan thread (*1) that was published and sold by Enterbrain. Comp Ace turned it into a comic, leading to the release of this first volume. When you first heard the story would be made into a comic, how did you feel?**

I wanted to try drawing a comic of *Maoyu*.
(Ishida)

TOUNO: At the time, I couldn't believe my works could become famous. I was worried whether or not it would actually work or if I was being deceived. Having my work turned into a comic felt even more unreal. I was really shocked when I actually saw the roughs. I thought, "Wow! It's actually a comic!" (laugh)

How did you end up drawing the comic?

ISHIDA: At the time, I was meeting with my editor with the idea of working on a new series. While we were talking, I introduced him to *Maoyu*, which I found on the Internet. Several days later, my editor suddenly called to tell me, "I'm going to Enterbrain to negotiate a comic project! Can I nominate you as the artist?" (laugh) I actually really wanted to try drawing a comic of *Maoyu*. Then this suddenly happened... Honestly, it was incredibly unexpected.

In creating the comic, does Touno-san ever ask you to draw something a certain way?

ISHIDA: He did have a few specific requests, but for the most part, no.

TOUNO: Aside from parts I feel are a little different from the original story, I basically let him handle everything. If I can explain my stance, *Maoyu* has already finished its online run, so as the author, I feel this media mixing is like a bonus track tacked on at the end.

Everyone is turning *Maoyu* into a new and interesting product in a new field. I feel as though I've joined the fans in supporting this work. I am truly happy... I am extremely grateful.

What impression do you have of Ishida-san's work?

TOUNO: The strength of Ishida-san's characters and his lines are very cool. I am the same way, but the act of creation is a cycle of doubt and concerns. However, none of that doubt appears in Ishida-san's lines. His lines feel certain, and that draws me to his art.

ISHIDA: Thank you. I'm happy to hear that.

***Maoyu* is a story with a lot of information spread throughout it. Ishida-san, is it difficult to absorb that while you're drawing the comic?**

ISHIDA: I do have to take some time to organize the information, but everything that needs to be told is in the work. On top of absorbing the content into my drawings, I try to add elements that cannot be conveyed through words. For example, even if a person doesn't immediately recognize the name "bareisho" (horse bell tuber), they'll understand if I show them a picture of a potato. I want to offer readers experiencing *Maoyu* for the first time through the comic the same things I felt reading the original work.

The Division of Fantasy and Reality

Touno-san, the worldview presented in *Maoyu* combines fantasy and reality. Why did you decide to write a story containing so much information?

TOUNO: It's true I was interested in history at the time, but there were other things I wanted to write about. Ultimately I decided to draw this... on basically an impulse. (laugh)

ISHIDA: I wanted to ask the same thing. Did you always have the idea of solving problems with real economic sense and techniques instead of swords and magic?

TOUNO: I did have that in mind before I started writing. For example, magic is an instrument of fantasy and doesn't exist in the real world. It feels as though you're saying stories about saving someone using "something miraculous," including magic, wouldn't save anyone in the real world, and it's sort of sad. In my own life, sometimes I watch the news and think, "It never ends." For example, in games, the hero and the princess get married, and the game ends. But in modern day Japan, about one third of couples divorce after getting married. A few hours after the credits roll and the screen turns black, it's possible the screen would display "However, they got divorced." (laugh) Even if the story seems over, it's not actually over, and your impression of a story changes depending on where it cuts off. I was interested in writing a story about the "true ending" that comes after it ends.

I decided to draw *Maoyu* on basically an impulse.
(Touno)

ISHIDA: I see. Though men and women who travel together often develop romantic feelings for each other through the "suspension bridge effect," we're not sure they can

maintain their marriage once they return to their normal lives. (laugh)

TOUNO: That's right. Just like in my story about divorce, some parts of reality are devoid of dreams and hope, so I thought it would be interesting to write about that as a story with dreams and hope.

I was drawn to the group performance element of *Maoyu*.
(ISHIDA)

Have you always liked fantasy?

TOUNO: Fantasy happened to be popular while I was growing up. So naturally, I love it.

ISHIDA: When we were young, video games and RPGs were just developing, and fantasy novels like *Fortune Quest* (*2) and *Slayers* (*3) were in their golden age. I've been watching them grow in real time since then, and I think it may have effected the foundation of my creation process.

Have you been creators since then?

TOUNO: I've always loved reading stories, but I actually didn't enjoy writing them. I realized recently it seems I don't like my own handwriting. It's really bad. (laugh) So for me, reading and writing stories were two completely different things. I started to enjoy writing them when I discovered computers and didn't have to look at my handwriting anymore, which was around high school.

ISHIDA: I've always loved drawing since I was little. In elementary school, some children become heroes during art class for their ability to draw, and I was one of those kids. Because I was drawing cartoons, I didn't receive any praise from my teachers. Come to think of it, I never finished it, but I was drawing a long Doraemon story with a friend.

The Message in Romantic Elements

***Maoyu* is primarily a story about saving the world, and it's also a love story between the Hero and Demon Queen. Did you originally want to write the primary story or the love story?**

TOUNO: I wanted to create a hodge-podge of a story using all my interesting ideas, so the answer is both.

How is it as an artist to draw a comic that combines many different elements?

ISHIDA: A work with lots of subjects is more worthwhile to draw. I enjoy group performances with lots of characters who aren't all facing the same direction. I think in some way, I was drawn to that element of *Maoyu* and wanted to draw this comic. I enjoy drawing the love story too.

TOUNO: In the first scene of the story, the Hero enters the Demon Queen's castle alone, and the Hero doesn't care if they kill each other. Later, the Hero flirts with the Demon Queen and Female Knight, but if not for that, at the very, very end of five volumes of *Maoyu*, I think he would have suicidally charged into something as enormous as the entire world and died.

If he cannot become happy as an individual, even if he fulfills his duty as a hero, ultimately he can only choose death. There was an older employee who was really hardworking at the company I used to work at. He was passionate about the company, but ultimately, he became ill and had to retire, and it made me really sad. His attitude was, "I don't need happiness in my personal life; I belong to the company," and while it allowed him to complete the company's major projects, ultimately he collapsed. I heard a similar story from an acquaintance the other day. So the Demon Queen's breasts and lying on her thighs is absolutely necessary! (laugh)

ISHIDA: You need those charms every once in a while. (laugh)

TOUNO: Yeah, they're absolutely necessary.

You mentioned a former coworker earlier. Are your characters modeled after actual people?

TOUNO: In general, no, but the Soldier's Son is modeled after my friend from high school.

ISHIDA: What? Did he really speak in an archaic way?

TOUNO: He really did. He was a pleasure to be around. (laugh)

Where Ideas are Born

I'm sure you sometimes get stuck while creating. When that happens, how do you get over it?

TOUNO: I take baths and go for walks. However, I don't like going on walks during the summer.

Do you take long baths?

TOUNO: Since I think a lot, I take longer baths. But I don't sit in the tub until I come up with an idea. I have to think of all kinds of things on a daily basis.

ISHIDA: A lot of authors like baths because they feel calmest and have their best ideas then.

TOUNO: However, the weakness of baths is any idea you have always seems good. Once you get out and reconsider them, they're only about 80 percent as attractive. (laugh)

ISHIDA: When I'm coming up with ideas, I visit family restaurants.

If the Hero hadn't flirted with the Demon Queen and Female Knight, I think he would have launched a suicide attack in the end.
(Touno)

Character Names and Appearances as Symbols

Tell us why you didn't name the characters in *Maoyu*.

I want to draw characters everyone can imagine.
(Ishida)

TOUNO: Not naming the characters and advancing the plot only through dialogue was the culture of the 2chan board on which I first released the story.

ISHIDA: Initially there were primarily conversations between existing characters with names. People started submitting works with nameless characters is a fad that started later, I think. With existing characters, you can assume the reader is familiar with them, and there's no need to explain who they are.

TOUNO: When I created the thread, the rules stated you had to include the character names and dialogue in the title. Because everyone could instantly tell, "Oh, this story is about such-and-such character," stories using existing characters gathered more attention. I had a lot of trouble garnering attention with Hero and Demon Queen... (laugh)

It's incredible you became popular despite that.

ISHIDA: Now that you mention it, while I was drawing the comic, I did think the original work had an unfair advantage. In the original work, dialogue is always led with "Hero" or "Demon Queen." Each time, the reader conjures an image of what the Hero and Demon Queen look like. Even if they call themselves something different, like the "White Swordsman" or "Crimson Scholar," because it says "hero" at the top of the dialogue, you can imagine the characters as they are.

Comics have pictures instead.

ISHIDA: Yes, but for example, when the Demon Queen names herself the Crimson Scholar, there's only a person dressed like a scholar, and the Demon Queen with horns isn't there. Because of this, in order to properly create a comic for this work, even if the character identifies herself as the Crimson Scholar while dressed differently, it's necessary to draw a character the reader recognizes as the Demon Queen. In *Maoyu* there are many characters besides the Hero and Demon Queen, but each reader imagines the characters differently. Because the author doesn't have to visually distinguish between them, I thought it gave the original author an unfair advantage. (laugh)

TOUNO: I had an easy time. (laugh) It's the advantage afforded by using text.

ISHIDA: The characters are basically templates, and I think each reader imagines them differently. Because of that, I try to draw the character that fits the greatest common devisor. For example,

when people hear Hero, I think most of them imagine the hero from *Dragon Quest* (*4), and I reference the origins of those templates.

TOUNO: You're right. Visually speaking, the *Dragon Quest* hero is the greatest common devisor.

ISHIDA: I think that was responsible for creating the image of a "hero" in the minds of young Japanese men. It's so deeply ingrained in them, I imagine that song plays inside their heads when they hear the word hero. And the hero of *Dragon Quest* doesn't speak, so he's even easier to use as a template. In contrast, the three sons don't have a model to serve as a template, so I shaped their silhouettes after a circle, triangle, and square so you could tell them apart.

TOUNO: It's better for the three sons to be easy to tell apart.

ISHIDA: You're right. That's why I focused on making them visually distinct instead of giving them strong characters. By the way, I modeled the middle-aged merchant after Torneko from *Dragon Quest.*

TOUNO: Ishida-san, in your comic you made the chief maid beautiful. Is she modeled after someone?

ISHIDA: In Japan, when you draw that kind of classic maid, you can't forget Mori Kaoru-san's *Emma* (*5), so I borrowed some from her.

TOUNO: The chief maid is more beautiful than the Demon Queen.

You drew the chief maid more beautifully than the Demon Queen.
(Touno)

ISHIDA: Because she's so firm with the Demon Queen, I thought I had to make her perfect enough that the Demon Queen couldn't talk back to her. I think the characters will change as I keep drawing them. The Demon Queen might get flabbier. (laugh)

TOUNO: They go all over the place, so her outfit will change.

ISHIDA: Right now, the Demon Queen's outfit changes every time. But personally, I enjoy drawing strong fantasy drawings the most. In some ways, *Maoyu* is a parody of major fantasy works, so while drawing in that major fantasy style, I hope to deviate a little.

TOUNO: The fairies will appear soon too.

THEY SACRIFICE THEIR LIVES TO MAKE THE DREAMS OF THEIR MASTERS COME TRUE.
WE ARE NOT SO DIFFERENT FROM SLAVES
...WHAT THEY DO IS NO DIFFERENT FROM A MAID.
THEY ACCEPT THE WILL OF THEIR MASTER AND OBEY ANYTHING THEIR MASTER SAYS

ISHIDA: That's right. In the future I'll draw the spirit world, and the Hero will declare himself the Black Knight. I'll have to dress him up.

TOUNO: In that way, I'm excited for the story to move forward in the comic and for new girls to appear. For example, it's possible the winged fairies who don't appear much in the book may be drawn.

Regarding the Comic

Ishida-san, is there anything you're careful of while drawing the comic?

ISHIDA: It's important to be careful of the way I capture actions explained in the dialogue. For example, when someone asks why another character is shaking, I think a lot about whether I should draw the character responding through dialogue to another shaking character, or if I should only draw the character's response. I think one of the things that makes *Maoyu* interesting is the exchange between characters, so I'm constantly thinking of how to balance the fun of the dialogue with the explanations.

I'm careful of the way I capture actions explained in the dialogue.
(Ishida)

Because the original work is written like a script, it's difficult to understand the distance between characters. How do you deal with that when you draw the comic?

ISHIDA: It depends on the characters involved in the exchange, but generally it's necessary to plan the placement of characters before the conversation begins. No one moves very much while talking, so their positions are determined before they begin speaking. That's why, for example, I think I put some thought into how I composition and development of the scene in chapter three where they lie on each other.

TOUNO: Does it become more difficult the more characters there are in a scene?

ISHIDA: No, it's actually easier. It's difficult to create an elaborate scene with only two characters talking. They're either facing either other or standing side by side. There aren't many options.

TOUNO: The first chapter of the comic was especially that way.

ISHIDA: Not only was it only the Hero and the Demon Queen, but they're just talking. The only changes I could make were spinning the perspective around or adding backgrounds. In that way, it was very difficult. But that's also the scene that inspired me to draw this, and if I couldn't do that, it would have affected the production of the rest of the comic. So I think drawing the first chapter was the most difficult and most important part.

TOUNO: *Maoyu* comics are being published by a number of publishers, and I'm excited to see how different artists interpret the original work. I think my influence is strong in the initial scene, but as the story develops, it really takes off. The last panel of the book is Ishida-san's panel! I'd like to tell the readers the last panel of the first volume is probably completely different across every comic. Readers of the book, I believe the last panel of the volume you're holding in your hands is the highlight of the comic.

If you have an opportunity, make your debut. (Touno)

ISHIDA: As the story progresses, the scene certainly starts to change a lot. While drawing a comic, you can't help but want to bring that over here, and I think the individuality of the artists show through there.

Could you say something to your readers who want to become authors or artists?

TOUNO: I guess you should go ahead and make your debut. If there's an opportunity before your eyes, you should make your debut, and worry about the details later. Plenty of times in your future, you'll encounter situations that require true strength that you must overcome in order to survive. But when that happens, you should gracefully accept defeat. The world isn't so cruel as to give up on you after one mistake. And remember this: life isn't easy. You can't give up after one mistake. Once you make your debut, do your best. I tell myself the same thing. (laugh)

ISHIDA: If there's something you want to draw, draw it. A comic artist can't move forward without creating anything. No matter how unskilled you may be or how long it takes, it's important to see a work through to the end.

You can submit it to a publisher or release it online, but you can worry once you finish a work. You'll get some kind of result out of it, and you'll learn what you can and can't do. It will drive you to move onto the next project, and that becomes your new source of strength to move forward.

I see. In conclusion, could you say something to your fans reading this comic?

ISHIDA: The original work is interesting, so I'll do my best to convey what I felt when I read it through my comic and draw the *Maoyu* I love.

TOUNO: Whether it's novels or comics, I think the act of reading is a once in a lifetime encounter with the reader. For those picking up *Maoyu* for the first time and those who have read the original work, I hope you discover new entertainment in Ishida's comic version of *Maoyu*! It's a cool and wonderful comic!

*1 2chan Thread
Maoyu was originally posted on the massive online BBS "2chan" under the title [Demon Queen "Become mine, Hero." Hero "I refuse!"]. Later, Enterbrain published and sold a refined book version.

*2 *Fortune Quest*
A fantasy light novel by Fukazawa Mishio. Beginning with the first volume in 1989, even a comic and animation were produced. Its unique worldview combined the fantasy elements of swords and magic with the realistic elements of levels and insurance.

*3 *Slayers*
A light novel by Kanzaka Hajime. Publishing starting 1990 by Fujimi Fantasia Bunko, sequels and spin-offs of this incredibly popular series are still being produced. The sometimes comical and sometimes serious adventure story follows the powerful sorceress Lina Inverse.

*4 *Dragon Quest*
A video game sold by Square Enix (formerly Enix) in 1986.

*5 *Emma*
A comic printed during the comic boom of 2002. Set in latter half of the 19th Century in England, the story depicts a love that exceeds social status. The protagonist Emma is a maid who looks good in glasses. In 2005, the series became an animation.

BOOK☆WALKER

MAOYU : Archenemy and Hero
"Become mine, Hero" "I refuse!"
Volume 1

KADOKAWA MANGA

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MAOYU MAOU YUUSHA
"KONO WARENO MONOTONARE, YUUSHAYO" "KOTOWARU!"
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